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A

SCHOOLMASTER'S DIFFICULTIES,

ABROAD AND AT HOME.



.... "non omnia possumus omnes."

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TO
THE MASTERS AND MISTRESSES
OF THE
Parochial, National, British, and Infant Schools,
IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,
IN TOKEN
OF LOVE TO THEIR OFFICE, OF SYMPATHY IN THEIR TRIALS,
OF GOOD WISHES FOR THEIR PROSPERITY,
THIS VOLUME
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

THERE are, doubtless, many teachers among those to whom these humble pages are addressed, who feel none of the difficulties therein mentioned; and some of whom may even be at a loss to comprehend what is intended by their recital. To them, of course, the whole volume, under any view, will possess little value; and all that is asked of them is, a candid allowance that others may differ from themselves. As good men and true, they have, probably, often seen, and sorrowed over, the trials and failures of their brethren; and may have sometimes tried to amend, direct, or soothe, where they had a reasonable hope that their influence and experience might be brought to bear. But if they be merely such as close their own eyes and then fancy that all are blind; or again, such as are merry monarchs of their little kingdom, because they know neither the privileges nor the responsibilities of their office,—they should be reminded, not to condemn others for being more sensitive, and less

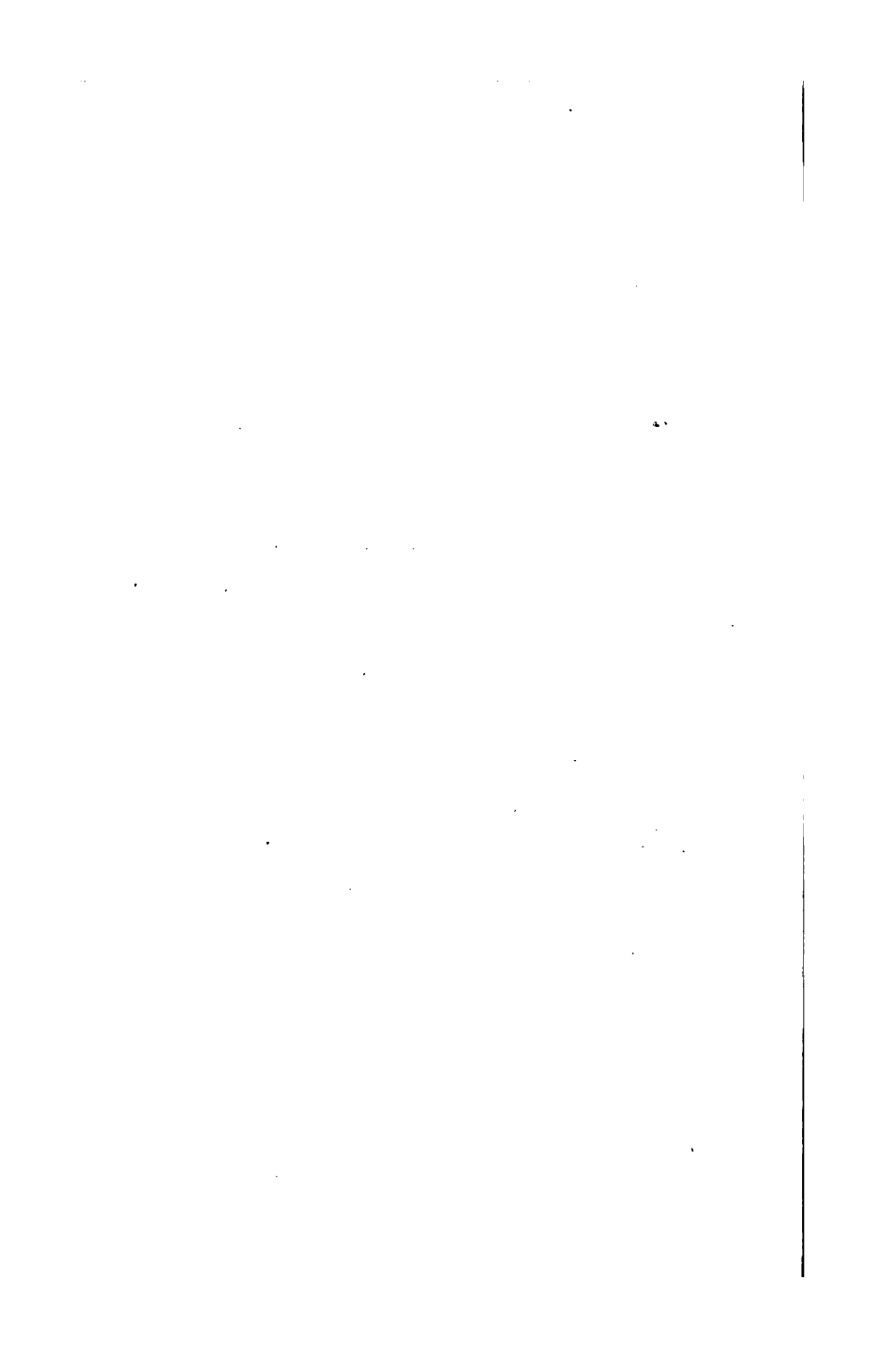
confident, than themselves; and not to find fault with any one who truly desires and aims at the welfare of a large band whom he may seek to encourage, if not to provoke, to love and good works.

On the other hand, it is trusted that those for whom these pages were written, will in some way profit by a few of the thoughts and suggestions contained therein. Directed by an abler and more experienced hand, they would have winged their way more swiftly and more home to the mark, than is likely to be now the case. Yet, if any benefit accrues to the wilful, or the depressed; or if a better champion is drawn forth to their succour,—the present Essay will not have failed in its end.

It has been long decided by grammarians that the masculine gender is more worthy than the feminine. If, in the present volume, advantage has been taken of this ungallant dogma, it is not from any disrespect to the female teachers of our schools, or by way of excepting them from its discussions, but merely to avoid the constant repetition of the same words.

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SCHOOLMASTER'S DIFFICULTIES,

ABROAD AND AT HOME.

CHAPTER I.

DIFFICULTIES IN REGARD TO HIS CALLING.

THERE was a time, and that not so many years ago, when no such difficulty was felt. With the exception of a few excellent institutions in the metropolis and in other places, where a noble-minded person or two were found toiling to raise the intellectual and moral standard of the poor, the work of education, for a century and a half after its active revival, was neglected and stunted by many of its nominal supporters, until, in later and worse years, it became, in too many cases, manifestly a delusion and a snare. It was then, unhappily, but too easy to define the calling of the schoolmaster, to settle his position, to prognosticate the benefits. When the office was thrust upon some worthless parish-clerk, broken-down mechanic, or day-labourer, upon some crippled

nurse, sempstress, or laundress, perhaps, merely to keep them from the workhouse; when these victims of their employers' selfish indifference, unfit alike both in body and mind for their charge, were themselves barely able to read and write; when their chief employment consisted in certain flourishes of a cane or fool's-cap, to vary the monotony of the horn-book or "Reading-made-easy," and in watching over the little urchins daily for six hours, that they might not roam the streets, or set themselves on fire: then, truly, the teachers, the scholars, the apparatus, the discipline, the expectations, the results, were all readily described.* But the case is very different

* In his report on the state of parochial education in the diocese of Salisbury, for 1840, Dr. Feild informs us, he was honestly told by one dame, when questioned about her school, "It is but little they pays me, and it is but little I teaches them." Her confession might, no doubt, as late as that year, have been adopted by very many teachers of parochial schools—and by a few, even now, it could be as honestly made. Oberlin's predecessor at Ban de la Roche, when introduced to one of their best schools, was shown a miserable room, where a number of wild and noisy children were crowded together, whose uproar prevented their hearing when the good Pastor spoke to them. The master—a withered old man—lay on a little bed in one corner. "And what do you teach the children?" asked the Pastor. "Nothing, sir," was the reply. "Nothing! why, how is that?" "Because I know nothing myself." "Why, then, have they made you the schoolmaster?" "Why," replied the old man, "I have been taking care of the Waldbach pigs for a great many years, and when I grew too old to do that, they sent me here to take care of their children." In our own country, it is no uncommon phenomenon to find many more solicitous about the styes and stuffing of their

now. The institution of several great and noble societies for the education of the poorer classes, and, more lately, the zealous movements of the Committee of Privy Council, backed by the glad co-operation of the educational party in the whole country, have gradually succeeded in bringing about a much better state of things, in the face of much opposition, and amidst many heart-burnings, misunderstandings, and mistakes. There is, besides, a self-evident necessity, from the very state of the public mind all through the land, to extend as widely and as efficiently as possible every means to rescue our teeming population from ignorance and vice; as well as a cry for help, from the neglected and degraded victims to their own passions, or our indifference, who feel in some measure that they need to be humanised, civilised, spiritualised. The word has gone forth, too, from Him with whom the most intricate future is only an ever-transparent Now, that in the later days "knowledge shall be increased." The million, therefore, must be taught in some way; and the only feeling with every good man, with every true lover of his fellow-subjects, his country, his God, should be, a generous rivalry to excel in every effort to compass so desirable an end. And amidst all the painful things one hears and sees in this great educational struggle, it is pleasant to be assured that a vastly increased attention on every side is being paid to the general subject at issue; that right-minded swine than about the homes and education of their poor little neighbours.

men are gently merging their petty differences; that an incomparably better system is adopted in most of our counties; that more commodious and healthy buildings, suitable books and apparatus, a larger staff of teachers, and these far better qualified, are to be met with in every quarter; and that a most efficient machinery has been wisely and liberally set a-going, to watch over and sustain the whole, so far as man may be capable of so doing.

When such changes as these have taken place, no wonder that the schoolmaster, whom all Britain declares to be "abroad," should find both his calling and position materially altered from those of his predecessors in the last century; and that, even in regard to such matters, he should be harassed by certain difficulties, which not unfrequently run up into annoyance. What then is his calling? Whereabouts in the sliding scale of society is his position? For until these things are tolerably agreed on, who can hit the mark? Some will appear above, others below, what is right or what is wished by themselves and others. The labourer, the mechanic, the tradesman, the professional man, the clergy, all have their place and calling in the great hive:—whereabouts is the schoolmaster's, and what is it? Some are puffed up, others are as humble: some expect too much, their neighbours too little: some are patronised and made saucy, others are soured by neglect: some are helped upward and encouraged, to their own detriment too often, whilst others are scorned and pushed down hill: some are honestly perplexed as to the

fitting steps to take, others make no doubt and are foiled, or, it may be, doubt all and every thing. Hence arise disappointments of all kinds, misunderstandings, coldness, opposition, contempt, where peace and good-will should abound: hence the ground is prepared for tares, which an enemy is ever ready to sow: hence many an excellent master, carried away by an undisciplined spirit, or chased away by mistaken measures, retires into another calling after years of preparation and expense: and hence the good cause of popular education is weakened for a time, in that locality, by the withdrawal through disgust of its most active promoters.

But before anything is ventured to be expressed, touching what a schoolmaster's calling and position in these days possibly may be, according to the notions of the mass of their true friends, it may not be amiss to say a few words upon what they most certainly are not, as exhibited in sundry classes of teachers, who, however, are rapidly disappearing from public gaze. If plain words are used to describe plain things, it is from no perverse wish to call hard names, or to hold up any person to ridicule: but from a desire unmistakably to point out, in the following menagerie, some of the rocks upon which many a beginner has run his bark; and, likewise, to exemplify, to the friends of education, a few of the rutts in our now well-beaten road, wherein they should prepare for an occasional jolt, if they should become extensive visitors of the manifold and many-coloured schools for the poor.

Amongst the different and yet practically harmonious, but mistaken, views of their place and duties which are still taken by many teachers, though it is hoped a decreasing minority, may be cited those of *the Dunce*. He knows nothing, and wants to know nothing, except how best to keep his post with the least trouble. He is the nominee of some big man in the place, who happens to hold the acres and the purse-strings; his father was bailiff, or sister cook, to the squire, who sees nothing in the fact that his pet can barely read or write, save by mechanical starts and tricks, to hinder him from teaching the children of the village to do and to learn that which the poor lout himself can neither do nor understand. But devoted attachment to his patron and the family, good-health, punctuality, stentorian lungs, a handsome allowance of wax-end cane, and a promiscuous array of books, slates, &c., well-dusted, yet little handled, make up for every deficiency.—Then may be mentioned *the Snob*, naturally sharp, it may be, with many good notions as to learning and discipline, many capital points in his character fitting him for the office he holds, if “the chap” and his drolleries had been only a little directed; but all is marred and rendered nearly useless, by a disgusting vulgarity, both of manners and personal habits, which shock the gentle to the quick, and draw out nicknames from the simple. His fingers are on the most intimate terms with teeth, ears, and nose; his reek is mature indeed; his harangues to the boys are *very* emphatic, and often really clever, though despisers of

number, case, mood, and negatives; his addresses to visitors as obligingly familiar as if they were his poodles instead of his patrons; and what he may lack in their esteem by his endless phases and emersions of low-life, he makes up for by a front-to-front stare of confident dignity, and an occasional indulgence of blowing or sputtering in their face.—*The Sloven* is a wholly different species of these mistaken persons. Possessing, perhaps, much knowledge, having had a good education for his grade, with undeniable talents suited to many an important trust, he is still in a fog of self-ignorance and self-importance, through which but little that is good or useful to his flock is ever allowed to pass. He is often found to talk in a literary way; covets possibly “self-improvement;” is a censor of his brethren and their plans; and would be thought to possess some secret which would greatly benefit the scholastic world: but his own soiled, dusty, torn, and spotted clothes betray the neglect and confusion of the undisciplined mind within. His duties are performed in a loose, off-hand, slipshod way; the room and apparatus are all in a state of dirt and disorder; the windows look as if they were never cleaned; the papers on the wall are foul, and disfigured by idle alterations to save himself the trouble of writing new ones; the register is dog’s-eared, and defaced with whole showers of blots and blunders; and the poor fellow’s dusky flesh, almost asking for soap and soda, is reflected in the tawny, greasy paws and maws of the unwashed colony round him.—Precisely

opposite to him in many particulars, is *the Fop*. Empty-headed, glaringly indifferent to every thing in the shape of mental cultivation, he is entirely given up to self-conceit, both in person and dress. Possessed of a tolerable exterior, and of the cast-off apparel of the young squire, he is almost able to cope with the neighbouring attorney or doctor: a gentle hint of cheap perfume announces his presence, but so discreetly managed, by way of not offending his betters, that one cannot tell whether it is shed forth from the glossy curls of his pate, or the folds of a neat and often-used kerchief. He has a soft yet half-discordant voice, with an extensive falsetto; wherewith he now and then delights the culinary establishment of the squire's lady, when sent for to assist the housekeeper in her accompts, or to write the lables for jars and boxes in the store-room or conservatory. This voice, said to have been "developed by the beautiful system of Hullah," is his great stock in trade, his chief resource in the general instruction of his scholars; these he has taught to sing, or rather to howl, some dozens of motley pieces, whose performance is an abomination to any cultivated ear, whether in sound or sense. As to learning, alack! only a few of the quicker and elder children can read or write a simple sentence. The lady-patroness, whose money pays the master's salary, thinks that only the upper classes in society should be scholars; and that, if peasants' children can write their own name to an agreement, or read their employer's on his carts, they know quite enough, and

more than they ought to be taught, were it not for public measures. Obedience to every word, and a bow to every county "gentle," with a merry face over their work; this is all she requires. And so, our fop teaches and dresses to her model: he has a courteous word and appropriate grimace for every visitor; but, as you leave his school, you cannot help saying to yourself, "Poor neglected lambs! what can you learn from such a puppet?"—Then, who has not observed *the Independent*? Sharp, and fully up to his work, as he thinks, knowing every body's power and influence with whom he has to do, kept in his situation by the force of parochial circumstances, or by an unseen hand behind the curtain,—he fawns and cringes, in secret, to this one and that one; but is, in public, short, saucy, surly, independent, or humorously free and easy, as he deems most suitable to his end and his company. A democrat and semi-infidels in grain, you soon discover he has no real principles, though by many a wile he thinks he has hidden both marks from your gaze: but something of the truth peeps out from his gait and his spirit, as with 'an old foraging-cap tilted half over his eyes, he struts through the school, mouthing lordly vulgar orders to the boys, who already manifest the issue of such an example. Vain of his fancied acquirements and position, he scorns, though respectfully, both assistance and instruction: he meekly grins at reproof or rebuke, with a scowling face that should be ticketed "Beware of dogs!": and when addressed upon any matter in which some change seems ad-

visible, either affects neither to see nor hear; or else with some insolent reply, and his chin elevated in the air like a camel's nose, he paces off, leaving you and your changes to follow if you list. — Let us now turn to *the Money Spinner*; a decent, well-behaved, hard-working, perhaps amiable, man; whose one notion is, that the school was established rather to benefit the master, than the children; and whose chief aim, therefore, is, thereby to turn an honest penny in any and every way he lawfully may. His apparel, and pædagogical properties, are all of the meanest kind: he is often suggesting purchases, where he can get a *leetle* profit from the seller: he is willing to paint, wash, or clean the school for a consideration, instead of employing “a stranger:” and while he coaxes one boy to dig his garden, another to clean his windows, and a third to run his errands, all gratis, he has picked up some job in the parish or neighbourhood, which, though it may add a few shillings to his purse, weakens or nullifies all his energies in the miserably deficient school, where he is unhappily the only ruler. — *The Wasp* is a sad enemy to the learning and efficiency of a good hive of children. He is usually a man who has been broken down by ill-health, or the disappointments of life; or else, one of a naturally bad disposition, to whom power presents more than the usual temptations of being fierce and cruel. He appears to be always in a state of irritation: his creaking, angry voice seems to betoken the approaching storm: his blindest commendations are always either delivered

in a pout, or coupled with some cutting words which are their bane: and as to his rebukes, they are such specimens of senseless fury, that the poor bewildered scholars may, blamelessly, long to be roaming through the lanes in the idlest ignorance. They really tremble when he looks at, or speaks to them: and if haply, in a half-unconscious fit of good-humour, he lays his hand on any little head by way of encouragement, there is an evident uneasiness to the honour in the face of the poor boy; and something like a suspicion, that either hair, ears, or chops will by-and-by pay for the distinction. A cane and thong of leather upon the desk, take the place of books and manuals, pens and paper; but if the closet at his back be opened, there will be found not only an abundant supply of the same instruments of torture, but many a birch and hazel, whose broken ends show what use they have often been put to. The boys would rather go without a meal, than ask him for help in their tasks: and as for any oral instruction he may give, it is frozen by fright, or longings that the striking of the clock would deliver them from their tormentor. — *The Idler* is a common spectacle in every country, though varying in talents, disposition, manners, and acquirements. He has made up his mind to trouble nobody, and to let neither things nor men trouble him. His duties sit as loosely on him as an old shoe: for why? Because when he has once wound up the clock, it goes as it will—in other words, when he has once set his scholars to work, he leaves them to puzzle out the rest

as they can. You may see him reading the newspaper at his desk, or some cheap novel by the fire-side ; whilst, in every class, half the boys are amusing themselves in every way, and not a few of the little rogues are lying at full length on the forms. You may almost tell the hours as they pass, by his yawns and stretches, which are of course copied accurately from one end of his domain to the other. The children help themselves to books and copy-slips, sums and employments, as they please : the master " makes it a rule never to interfere with the monitors," and never " pretends to know what work is done, or what books are read by *every* class." The first class is his only care ; and if a sprinkling of them can read tolerably, write a bold hand, and blunder through compound addition, he goes home fully satisfied that the school is doing its work, though the poor boys are growing up in the worst forms of ignorance and idleness. — *The Sop* is, happily, a decreasing species of nuisance in our schools ; though he may still be noticed in some neglected places, where a name to live is all that is desired, or where most of the well-to-do people are worse than himself. His hanging cheeks, half purple, half mahogany-coloured, betray his habits, as easily as do his blinking eyes, his muddled manner, and steaming breath : his clothes are fouled with many a stain, and reek throughout with that peculiar smell of tobacco and pot-house from which one shrinks with disgust. Always late at his duties, and early to leave them, he is lost in a maze whilst they are going on : his memory gone,

his self-respect gone, his little usefulness gone, he half-reels to and fro through the room, with a vacant stare, and an occasional attempt at discipline or teaching; whilst he is inwardly longing for one of his poisonous draughts, or for the hour that shall find him ensconced in the alehouse, listening to, or attempting to enlighten, his fellow-victims to drink, — *The Ambitious Man* is a trouble of a very different kind. Descended probably from a somewhat better stock than most of his compeers, and having enjoyed a tolerable education for his grade, his great object is to distinguish himself and his school from all others in the neighbourhood, as something great and original. He cannot rest from these endeavours, but is ever on the watch to make some fresh change. He is fond of the terms “exploded systems,” and “worn-out books;” but, unhappily, those which he substitutes are rarely satisfactory to himself after a half-year’s trial, and are rather the selections of his own prejudice, than the recommendations of any man, or set of men, who have really studied the subject. He is a reader of elementary books which are seldom heard of; and adopts almost any conceivable notion, for the sake of appearing unusually familiar with the details and difficulties of his profession; hence, he is ready to discuss school questions with all visitors, many of whom are, of course, impressed with his apparently uncommon talents, and struck by a few exhibitions of out-of-the-way knowledge in the children. And yet, if you have anything like a conversation with him, you will soon detect gross

ignorance both of the principles and duties of his calling; an absence of anything like true convictions, experimental conclusions, or solid foundations, in all his proceedings; and such a tangled web of inconsistent and useless absurdities in the real working of his school, that you can hardly help wondering how and why the reluctant managers should ever have allowed him license to change the whole current of affairs, to the extent they have done. — *The Toady* can never be fully appreciated, but by those who have been honoured with his smiles and his fair speeches. The children and their parents, the ministers and managers and visitors, all are more or less subject to his blandishments, according to the end he has in view. Every incompetency or neglect of duty, whenever detected and complained of, is met by some cunning but transparent compliment to the discernment and advice of the party who interferes; and whilst you, perhaps, are feeling indignant that such grave matters should be so impertinently handled, you may observe a self-satisfied smirk on the funny fellow's face, at what he fancies the clever conceit of his speech. His great aim is to get the ear of every influential person in the management, and then, by oily words, to insinuate a belief of his special attention to the duties of his station, and his knowledge of the dispositions and attainments of the children: and, truly, if every member of the committee upon whom he has thus practised, were to contribute his share of the flattering speeches poured into his ears, all of them

would more than ever heartily wish that such perverse talent were directed into a better channel. — *The Shuffler* must close this painful list, though its enlargement would be easy. It is hardly to be conceived that any visitor, who has unexpectedly entered the room half a dozen times, should feel any confidence in him; and as for the children, they are so inured to his tricks of finesse and duplicity, that either a thorough contempt for him must spring up in their minds, or they will assuredly in due season copy his pestilent example. If you enter the school abruptly at an unusual hour, you are likely to find him — and perhaps one of the more forward boys — engaged about some private business of his own: when he is conscious of your presence, the papers he was engaged with are bundled into his desk; he and the lad advance towards you with a new time-table, school-roll, or such like; and he will begin discoursing with you upon certain changes just about to be made. If at any time you examine him upon what has been done in the last month by any class, he will tell you in detail; though, when the class itself is questioned, not one particular in four is found to be correct. If you try the working of the whole school by the time-table, or in any other way that the written papers on the wall suggest, you will soon find that there is more sham than truth in the master's arrangements; that he really knows but little of what the lads are doing; and that his object is to blind folks' eyes, that he may play his own game. If he has any reason to suspect a visit, especially from an inspector,

whether in or out of office, every thing will be in a sort of "apple-pie order;" himself will be duly at his post, gravely diligent and watchful; every thing will be french-polished for your eye; a suitable routine of preparation will be got up; and every class will be adroitly trained to be put through their paces for your wonderment, if you are disposed to be so taken in.

Now all these are wretchedly mistaken men: mistaken as to deceiving others, or even themselves,—as to the path of true usefulness (happiness is out of the question),—as to an eventual retribution. That they are utterly ignorant of, and unfit for, their calling and position is self-evident to every good man who attentively watches their career: and it is not in the least likely, that, continuing in such delusions, any real friend of education can assign to them a local habitation and a name, in the great effort which is now being made to rescue the children of the poor from ignorance and vice.

But still, when all these painful characters are eliminated, there remains a very large band of true and anxious men, differing widely in their talents and disposition, in their training and labours, as well as in the systems and management under which they are acting, who from various causes do feel often perplexed as to what their calling and position are. These, to them often, important considerations, are nowhere defined in books, for truly they cannot be, except in general terms: they are not at all agreed on by the body of teachers, or the educational

party at large: they are not discoverable by use, for the circumstances of every neighbourhood are constantly changing: and they are not stated by employers, though experience soon unfolds the particular bias of all persons in such matters. In some places the master is cuffed and kept down; in others he is "soaped" and pushed on. By these he is indulged and coaxed; by those he is treated almost like a necessary evil. One party trusts every thing in his hands; another binds him fast with a double chain. In one case he is encouraged to wear a particular-cut coat, recommended to the Bishop for a license, taught to aspire to be a deacon; and meanwhile is often, at meetings and on public occasions, treated with as much deference as one of the "inferior" clergy: in the other case, he is looked upon as a paltry fellow, a mere drudge of the parish, whom it is a kindness to notice with a donnish nod as —, "the poor schoolmaster." Amidst such scenes and treatment, varying often with the changes in the management, how is it possible that any conscientious and reflecting person, in the anxious discharge of his duties, can help wishing in his solitary retirement that he better knew what were really the duties of his calling; what was the true line of demarcation which separated the things within his province from such as were without: and, further, that he could gather, from his patrons and fellow-workmen, what was something like the level in the great tidal wave of social life, whereon it was desirable he should try to maintain his frail and shifting bark?

To attempt here to give an answer to these two questions, which, however matters may roll on between the master and his patrons, will constantly present themselves to his perplexed or disappointed spirit, would be manifestly presumptuous and absurd. Nevertheless, a few plain things may be urged upon each point, which may tend to soothe and calm the too feverish and too sensitive mind; or, else, may possibly suggest a few thoughts of self-discipline and contented submission, under almost any circumstances, which shall end in enlarged usefulness and peace.

1. First, then, as to his CALLING. Surely, it is tolerably well defined by his very name — School-master, *i. e.*, says Dr. Johnson, “*one who presides and teaches in a school.*” And though it be true that the word “master” is an ambiguous term taken by itself, yet, in its derivation, in its connection, in its understood use by all parties when not merely contentious, in its translation into nearly every European language, in the common-sense view of the office itself, it can have but one meaning; viz. that which the great lexicographer has assigned it. It evidently does not designate the Grand Turk of scholastics in a parish—not the Dictator General—not the Main-spring—not the Lawgiver and Judge—not the subscribers, the committee, the clergy, all merged in one *ideal form*, themselves sunk, their wishes and feelings buried, their experience and study blotted out, to make room for the mere despot, whose favourite word is “my,” and still “my.” No: but,

as Johnson says, it is a *president* and *teacher* whom in common parlance such a term describes. That is to say ; here is an assembly of human beings, created in the image of God, the lambs of the Saviour's fold — the future citizens of our great commonwealth — it may be, generals, bishops, legislators, and whoever else shall head the top of the mighty pyramid — with intellects, feelings, sympathies, as yet perhaps undeveloped and unmoulded — with immortal souls, to be gently led and fed, disciplined, won, and fitted to habits of duty and order, to happiness and heaven. A system (necessarily general and vague in many things) is adopted by certain persons, who, banded together by a conviction of the importance of a sound and religious education to the poor, merge many minor differences in one common effort to gain their end ; cheerfully laying out their money, disarming prejudice, undergoing labours, and bearing the burden and heat of the day, in provoking others to help, as well as in building, maintaining, and properly equipping the school which is the object of their desire. A person is chosen freely, and at their discretion and judgment, to carry out their general views as far as may be : he is not thrust upon them by necessity, but is voluntarily selected by them as their officer for the time being, in fully the same independent way in which any of them might select a servant, a secretary, or tutor, or chaplain, to perform such duties as belonged to each calling. The common stipulations are made ; the necessary directions given ; special orders on some points, and ad-

vice on others, laid down ; wishes, prejudices, fears, difficulties, are hinted at or understood ; and a full confidence as to smaller details, with considerable license in all, is reposed by the patrons in the person whom they select as their representative, in hope that he will at all times fully consult their interest, and frankly communicate any points of difference between them, for their own free judgment and decision. Whether the whole body of patrons sits as a committee, or whether they delegate their wishes and authority to a few or even to one of their number, they and they alone, in the aggregate or by deputy, are the only rulers of the institution. The "Master" *presides* under them, administers their laws, carries out their plans, fulfils their orders, shares their anxieties, and enjoys with them all the success of the institution. He rules his little kingdom, supreme in every case where he is honestly faithful to his trust ; he teaches, personally or by his own assistants, whatever it has been deemed advisable to exhibit to the minds of his charge ; in both cases he is "the Master," not absolutely, but in a limited constitutional way — not, indeed, as "Master" in the character of Turannos ; rather as "Master" in that of Didascalos, — and none can interfere to thwart or alter, save those who appoint. He rules and teaches, not his employers, but his scholars ; he directs their studies, governs their manners, watches their actions and words, restrains and counsels, commands or corrects, from the highest even to the lowest matters — *i. e.* if he be inclined

so to do. The things that concern the training of the young mind for this world, as well as those far more important ones which relate to the future, are all entrusted to him within certain general limits; and he is bound, upon every consideration, to discharge the important office he has thus accepted, cheerfully, impartially, zealously, and faithfully, according to the ability he possesses. If difficulties, failures, and miscarriages arise, or if experimental changes seem desirable, he can always consult with his patrons; who have every reason to support him in all legitimate exercise of his authority, and to encourage his efforts for the improvement of their common plans.

Well: after making every deduction for its labours and trials, its vexations and disappointments, what a truly enviable calling have we here, when exercised by a faithful man, who patiently endures to the end! Granted, that many details are left so wholly unsettled that he does not know the full range either of his duties or responsibility: granted, that he may be occasionally checked and buffeted by some over-busy patron, or the whole body unitedly, and that he does not deserve it: granted, that repeated changes, much difference of opinion upon religious matters in the committee, and not a little clashing of the ecclesiastical and political systems, may add to his uncertainties as to special teaching, and prevent his always pleasing all who are over him: — what then? Are not these points of irritation mere trifles, compared with the vast amount of *most intelligible* usefulness

that remains? Are they not rather the offspring of undisciplined temper, than of right principle? Do they really concern that *subordinate* office which, when he accepted it, he knew was subject to such, and even greater, limitations? Are they not altogether out of his province? But, supposing these things are not so in his way of thinking, or even in fact; still, where is the benefit of letting them fret his spirit, and mar his usefulness, when he has such a noble course open to him in so many ways? Why pout and squabble, when he has such abundant opportunities of teaching fifty, or it may be two hundred, human beings their duty to God and man; of fitting them for future scenes of usefulness; of giving them that which is better than house and land; and of lying down, night after night, satisfied that on the main, and with all the crotchety curbs he fancies are on him, he has tried to discharge with faithfulness his important trust? His calling will then be recognised as an arduous one, by every good man, though they agree not in all things in the management; for it is the teaching and training in intellectual and social, moral and religious habits, those neglected little ones, who, without such labours of love, might probably be lost for both worlds. The "Master" may perhaps never, in this world, see the full effect of his toil in his calling; yet, if faithfully and wisely pursued, its end must more or less be gained: and his reward is sure, after many days, though as yet it does not appear to the outward eye.

2. As to POSITION. When such a trust as is

above described, is conscientiously and faithfully discharged, this second point of our inquiry never was, or will be long, a matter of doubt or regret. The foolish hankering to be thought, and to be, some great person with the little world wherein he moves, will have died away, in the busy enjoyment of active duties, in the esteem (however distant and concealed) of all with whom he has to do, and in the self-respect of a serious and well-disciplined mind. None but the ignorant, the selfish, the vile, will attempt to abuse or degrade such a character: every right-minded patron will feel that the master's post is one of honour, and according to his ability will so treat it: the children and parents cannot but accord him much of his due, when they are so largely the gainers by his faithful and patient labours: and the inhabitants of a neighbourhood, when they see what was once a crowd of ragged idle children, as rude and untutored as a wild ass's colt, now transformed into cleanly, industrious, well-behaved, and intelligent beings, cannot but gladly welcome such a master among them, and help him up to that position amongst them for which he may have a fitness or claim. Who can ever respect a stock? or honour a mere name? or give a creditable position to the careless, the uncivil, the unfaithful? Surely none: yet, on the other hand, who can help admiring the zealous, the honest, the laborious, the true-hearted, the self-denying, the meek! And, in proportion as these amiable qualities are consistently developed in you, people of all grades will seek and respect you

in your path, and you will have your place and honour, as well as your reward, even in this life, though only in part. If otherwise, then you may remember who has said, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" for the envious and morose, the rugged and worthless, can never rest, except they do mischief. Or, unhappily, it may be, the fault is your own. Bad temper, wrong habits, unjustifiable notions, or unfaithfulness and inconsistency *even in little things*, may have destroyed the bloom of your prospects. If so, then blame none but yourself. You have been sowing cockle, looking to reap barley. Begin afresh: it is never too late, where there is a will and a path. Better is he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city. You have new faces coming constantly before you — new ground to break up — fresh minds to act upon. Look upward for help and strength; take counsel with true friends; be earnest, unflinching, faithful in your duties, and matters will speedily mend. You will probably soon find no reason to complain that others are interfering with, and hedging in, your calling; or that you are denied an honourable and respectable position in society. But if you yield to evil within, and to temptations or provocations without, elements never wanting in such a career, then, prepare to eat the fruit of your way of an undutiful, repining, or contentious spirit: you will resolve to sow the wind; beware, lest you in due time reap the whirlwind.

CHAP. II.

DIFFICULTIES IN RELATION TO HIMSELF.

No man, probably, ever entered on a new employment, and rightly calculated beforehand its labours, trials, or personal cost to body and mind. However he may differ from the simple, who, foreseeing much of the evil that may come upon them, still pass on without forecasting a remedy, and so are punished; yet the most prudent man, under the above circumstances, is seldom able to hide himself from such troubles, merely because their character and extent are not fully believed. Such has been, and for some time to come must be, the lot of by far the greater part of our most laborious and pains-taking teachers. A man or woman taken from another calling, wherein their earliest and most pliable years have been spent, and appointed to preside and teach in a large and well-managed school; or, what is perhaps more common, an ill-taught and ill-teaching person, who may have been long drilling a crowd of rosy little urchins, without much benefit to them or to any one, and is, by the anxious solicitude of his new employers, by the fostering care of a watchful Government, and by the talented labours of its persevering officials, after a certain amount of hasty preparation, suddenly put into the position of one who is likely

both to do and to get good;— finds himself, or herself, at once beset with many unexpected trials, with which, at first, it is sore work to grapple. In some cases these are gradually mastered by the energetic spirit of the new comer, sustained and counselled by experienced friends: in other cases, where such advantages fail, these unlooked-for pressures upon the whole man often tempt to weariness in well-doing, to dissatisfaction, to longing for past ease, to an angry disputatious spirit, and it may be to a kicking against reasonable authority and constituted order. Where, unhappily, the latter issue has been witnessed, there it may be, and often has been, if not to the ruin of the teacher, and the noble cause of education, at least to the degradation of the one in his own and every right-minded person's esteem, and to the progress of the good work being hindered, and the minds of many half-hearted supporters poisoned against it for many years in that locality.

Yet, surely, all such troubles, whenever they gain the mastery, must have been encouraged by a morbid fancy or fear, or else in some way self-provoked; they are not the necessary concomitants of the new calling and new duties: and, as surely, they may, generally, be traced to that copious source of so many evils in the world, viz. the absence of self-discipline. How strikingly true, in the experience of us all, is that inspired declaration, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth!" That yoke must be borne some time or other, by every great and consistent character, however humble

the line of things wherein he labours ; and it is far better to bear it in advanced age, even under many provoking disadvantages, than not at all, provided self be mastered at the last. That grand idol — the universal idol, by the side of which all others are as nothing, and before which, tricked out in its gold and gewgaws, so many millions fall down and worship to the sound of all kinds of music that a deceived heart and a deceiving world can supply — that grand idol, self, must be abased in our own estimation — generally, in that of others for a season — before we can be exalted to real and extensive usefulness, in the moral improvement of our fellow-beings. What a pleasing spectacle is it, to observe any individual who, in every situation of life, is master of his own spirit !

It is not to be expected that any enumeration is here about to be made of all the sources of *difficulty with himself* which the schoolmaster may feel, for a considerable time, after his entering upon the due discharge of his important and onerous duties. But many of their best friends have too often witnessed the personal struggle, not to have deeply sympathised in the conflict going on within : it has even been the painful lot of some to add fuel to the flame, though, upon other occasions, it has been their happy privilege to pour the balm into a weary, wounded, and almost broken spirit. And so, all that is contemplated in these sentences is, merely to throw out a few hints to the perplexed and burdened, which the thoughtful or energetic may work out at greater

length for their own use. From amongst the many heads of *Personal Difficulties* which present themselves for notice, only three will now be pointed at.

1. Such as are PHYSICAL. There is now experienced a great change in the labour of the mere outward man. He is no longer employed in the easy routine of the shop or counting-house, or the amusing toils of the mechanic and craftsman. Neither is he the idle, gossiping, flippant, do-nothing, get-nothing, love-nothing teacher that once perhaps he was. He has fallen into what he feels to be a serious and engrossing occupation; body and mind are taxed more heavily than he ever had them before: and as he moves to and fro amidst the buzzing hum of his busy hive, you cannot fail to discern the anxious, thoughtful, pains-taking, watchful, eagle-eyed, sharp-eared, earnest character whose spirit seems hovering over all the school. This draws upon the good man's natural frame: long before the time for dismissing his flock he has become thoroughly weary, in a way he can hardly account for; he is worn out by the constant effort, until his more buoyant energies are all *used up*. On other days, when in a still lower key, his head aches, he does not know where or how; his eyes seem dazzled, for he sees nothing with any force; his ears are ringing with confused noises, and yet the room is as still as it ought to be; his legs appear to totter, and he has a sensation of not being able to walk straight to any point. He is drowsy, yet all-excited; stupid, yet nervous; sinking for want of food and refreshment,

yet loath to take them. Then, as to his mind, it is worn out, and seems incapable of fastening upon any subject or matter in hand; it is easily bewildered by mere trifles, loses the balance of its temper when provoked, and seems, somehow or other, to have suddenly expended all its resources. In short, the dispirited, worn-out labourer feels himself to be fit for nothing but silence, darkness, bed.

Such a state of things should never be allowed to continue day after day, lest the sufferer should resign a situation which suits him, and for which he may possibly be especially qualified, from fear of evils which really do not exist; or lest he should become hardened and morose, idle and indifferent; or again, if he be a truly good and faithful man, lest either body or mind give way beneath the constantly recurring burden. The body is only a machine—in many cases, a far more delicate one than appears;—and hence, it must be tended and assisted in its toils, as other engines are: the mind, also, like a sword too sharp for the scabbard, may, by its very energy and anxiety, weaken the poor fleshly tabernacle, and prematurely lay it low. Such a sense of weariness and wasting must, therefore, be met by persevering and determined measures, to refresh, for to-morrow's usefulness, what has been injured by the wear-and-tear of to-day. What, then, are the means to be used? First, in the school-room itself. What is the state of the *ventilation*? if bad, do not lose a day without applying in the proper quarter to have it improved; for, as long as you

pass so many hours in a foul and pestilential atmosphere, you must expect not only to lose all energy, but to sow the seeds of fatal disease. If the school should be under Government inspection, you would do well to move your patrons to avail themselves of the experience of the inspector, in such matters, before they incurred any expense, in perhaps only half-curing the evil, whilst a new train of nuisances were run into. Meanwhile, by a judicious management of windows and doors, you may at least get rid of a large amount of impure air, and let in fresh streams of living atmosphere, which will invigorate both you and the children.

Again, can anything be improved in the *system* of your teaching? Is there more pressing upon you, either always, or at certain hours, than there need be? Is either body or mind continually at work? Have you no short intervals of comparative repose, when, under your presiding gaze from your desk, the work of the whole school may go forward, as it were in leading-strings, without your constantly moving from class to class, to control and assist? If you are thus oppressing yourself, try and reform your plan, lest you break down under its weight. If you cannot devise one, at least inquire for some new method, whereby you may better divide the labour of the day, and distribute your strength. The unbent bow regains its elasticity: and a few minutes of comparative rest, save of general watchfulness, would possibly spare you many a painful hour. Further, what is the general character of your *own*

temper, as a master? Are you constantly in a flurry and fluster; fidgetty about trifles; fuming and fretting about what will happen, do what you may; when often, it would be practical wisdom to have neither eyes nor ears? Do you allow yourself to be ruffled and seriously disturbed by the hourly mishaps, the noise and disorder, the neglects, and wilful or unwilling faults, which are more or less the necessary attendants upon the assembling of poor untutored children? Then, learn to train yourself in habits of calmness upon all such occasions. Your own excitability, probably, only adds to the mischief; and your nervous anxiety to have every little matter go *exactly* as you wish, only diminishes the chances that it will. At all events, such an over-strained temperament, such an absence of coolness and calmness within, will be sure to add grievously to the waste of your energy and strength.

Secondly. What means can you adopt out of school, to remedy this distressing weariness of which mention has been made? These are all so commonly understood and talked about, that if it be not almost needless even to mention them, it is at least on that account the more necessary to enforce confidence and perseverance in them. As in most other cases, so in this, the very regimen that is required in a particular case, is just that which the person shrinks from: hence, many are willing to adopt the most violent remedies, rather than patiently and constantly follow up simple and easy remedies, which call for a large amount of self-discipline. Strive, then, to forget

your scholastic duties as much as you possibly can, in your seasons of leisure; and so arrange your affairs, that you have as little school-business to do out of school-hours as possible. Some managers are far too thoughtless, or too selfish, in this particular: they give their teachers writing-work, binding, repairing,—their female teachers, fixing, or cutting-out work, in addition,—which they expect to be done in those very hours so needful for rest; and, in some cases, for which their very small stipends show clearly they are not paid. These over-hours should, *in such cases*, not be encouraged: on the contrary, employers should be spoken to, when, if reasonable and liberal persons, they will adopt other ways of compassing their end. See that you have sufficient walking-exercise: especially, early in the morning, and at the close of your duties. Do not fancy you are tired or poorly, and cannot walk; for strength and enjoyment will accompany the effort, as you inhale the pure, refreshing air blowing around you, and as the whole circulation of your blood is kept in a healthy current by it, and by the active movement of every limb. It has often been observed that there are fewer days in our own country than in most others, taking in the entire year, when a walk of some length is not possible; yet, even in unfavourable weather, and indeed on other occasions when advisable, a ride on a neighbour's pony, or a drive with him, might secure you a certain amount of invigorating, one might almost say life-giving, air, which will do more to restore your health and animal

spirits, than, as is too often done, loading the stomach with meat and drink.

It would seem absurd to state that a proper amount of good and wholesome food is requisite, if one did not often see the evil consequences of excess on one hand, and of penuriousness on the other, to which so many give way, to the detriment of their health, intellect, or temper. Such habits of indulgence, or covetousness, generally bring their own recompence, and in due season usually defeat the very purposes of those who run into them. Rest after the chief meal, both from bodily and mental exertion, is notoriously insisted on by dyspeptic advisers; and, to say the least of it, is, in the end, a greater saving of time and toil than the unceasing vagaries of those restless beings who will be always a-doing. Cheerful society, too, and amusing conversation, must be numbered amongst the best methods to recruit the wasted spirits of the weary master, who probably requires them the more in proportion as he shrinks from the exertion they demand. By them he will be, as it were, forcibly drawn out of his own concerns, and made to feel an interest in things which may do him good in many ways; and when he returns to his home or his solitude, if he should not feel himself a wiser and better man, he will at least have enjoyed a little relaxation, which may have kept off some of that bad company too often the attendant of our own lonely thoughts. Early hours, habits of regularity, a frequent plunge in the nearest stream, or daily ablutions with cold

water, preceded by a thorough friction with the roughest towel, and many more of those good old-fashioned ways used by our forefathers to "keep up the tabernacle," will readily occur to the reader; concerning all of which a persevering experience must be the best guide, sustained by the conviction that, in the maintenance and recovery of health, no true means should be despised, and no pains thought too great.

2. Let us now advance to those personal difficulties of the schoolmaster, which may be termed INTELLECTUAL. That self-conceit, to which we are all naturally so prone, makes many a teacher look upon himself as vastly wise, until he has been handled by one of H. M. Inspectors, or found out his level during a temporary visit to the benches of a training-school. It is true, indeed, that, even after such a sifting, some will continue just what they were, not in the least shaken from the lofty pinnacle whereon they had balanced their own talents; but of them no account can here be taken, beyond echoing the declaration of Solomon: "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him." But the truly earnest and reflecting man who has been humbled by such a peep into himself, cannot but heartily desire to remove some of those intellectual deficiencies to which he has awakened, almost as from a dream. He can now well account for some of his own failures, in the late-discovered consciousness of his own inefficiency for the office he has sustained so many years: he can

now explain many a smile on the faces of some, and many a grave rebuke on the faces of other, visitors to his school, who listened to his teaching: he can now cease to wonder that the boys of a neighbouring school should so far outstrip his own in every branch of learning, when he sees how he has been blundering through his duties, whilst his neighbour has had a surer way to go on: and he can now hope, by a thorough schooling of himself, to remedy some little portion of that difficulty he has felt honestly to maintain his post as a teacher, and of that miserably wasting fatigue and confusion which every zealous day's work has invariably brought with it. And so follows the important inquiry, concerning the how, what, and when, in the acquirement of this necessary learning.

How is it to be gained? If you can do so, avail yourself of the advice of one of H. M. Inspectors, which, if you can only manage to get the speech of him, will probably be readily, as kindly, given, whether your school be or be not under Government supervision; and then, try and carry out his recommendations in all their details. If you do not find this practicable, endeavour to become a pupil at some training-school for masters for as long a period as your patrons and your finances will allow. There, whatever may be the reputed evils of many such institutions (and surely you are old enough to guard against them), you will undoubtedly meet with such assistance in your studies as is to be found nowhere else, with the additional advantage of its being spe-

cially adapted to such cases as your own. But, supposing that neither of these alternatives can be taken by you, then nothing seems to be left but for you to be more or less self-taught, and to be numbered with some hundreds of valuable and energetic teachers who, so to speak, are home-made. Under these circumstances, the question still returns, *How* you are to school and train yourself? Why, not imperfectly, shamming to be that which you are not, and deceiving yourself (but no one else) with a pretence of knowledge you do not possess. Surely, it can be worth no man's pains to become a sort of scholastic magpie, a light feather here and another there, whilst all the rest is the darkness of ignorance, if not of pert error. But what you do, resolve to do thoroughly. Begin at the veriest beginning. There is no rail-road to learning. You must make up your mind to labour and fag at it, as all your predecessors in the same path have done. The foundation must be laid as deep as is in your power; and not upon mere hasty conclusions foisted into your eyes by some trumpery process, which never effectually reaches either the memory or understanding. Eschew, therefore, as much as possible all keys, "cribs," tricks of memory, and short cuts to knowledge; for wisdom so gained soon fades away. When once the "cram" has been cast forth on the occasion for which it was stuffed in, the victim of such a mistaken system becomes only a double blockhead, *i. e.*, not only ignorant of facts and truths, but confused with errors of the most ludicrous kind. Aim, therefore, to com-

prehend whatever you take in hand ; acquaint yourself with principles ; watch for differences ; cultivate a habit of investigation ; adopt method, order, and precision in all your studies ; store your memory with facts and realities, with rules and conclusions, which you see must be always useful ; and never allow your patient perseverance to flag, either in the unravelling of an error, or the search after truth. Do you still ask, *How* can I do all this ? The answer is at hand — Get help. Some clergyman or minister in the parish or neighbourhood ; some member of the school-committee, or one of its more zealous supporters ; some master of a school near you, whether for the poor or rich ; one of the better sort of tradesmen, the excise officer, tax-gatherer, &c., might all in their degree help you on : the first-mentioned being, of course, best able to direct you in the choice of books, plans, and the more important objects of your studies ; the latter, probably, no inefficient assistants in your working out many details.

What are you to learn ? is the next question. The reply is equally short, viz. this — Whatever is truly useful. The friend whom you consult, may perhaps hold you out a light in the labyrinth of your perplexities ; but if not, your own ignorance is an unfailing guide as to what you require to know. Look within, then, and strive conscientiously to discover the worst blot upon your fitness for your office : begin with that, or at any rate with what you see to be most necessary, and then, Forwards !

must be always your word. Ascertain, as you easily may, the general character of your reading, writing, and spelling, as these may be at once and speedily improved by dint of observation and practice. But before beginning to drill yourself in higher matters, you would do well to borrow, from some one who may possess it, a very excellent catalogue of elementary books for the use of schools and masters, printed for the Committee of Council on Education; from which, especially if you have any competent adviser, you may select the books most useful to you, and thus avoid more expensive and less suitable publications. You can then proceed steadily in Arithmetic, Algebra, and Mathematics; in Grammar and Geography; in History, and any other branch of knowledge that invites you; always taking care that, whatever you do, you do well and intelligently, feeling your ground as you go along, and not confusing or overburdening your mind with too many subjects at one time. But, above all, be sure to acquaint yourself thoroughly with the blessed truths of God's holy word, by daily reading and meditation; for until these are duly imprinted on your own mind and affections, you will know nothing as you ought to know, and can have but little hope of helping forward the lambs of the fold in any knowledge of those things which concern their everlasting peace.

When, you may now ask, are you to do all this, with your present duties already pressing on you, like a millstone round your neck? *When? Why now*

is the time — the very time to begin: do not lose a day. As to leisure and opportunity, more than enough will present themselves; for, where there is a will, there is a way. Mind, however, that school-hours are not the time; whoever employs them for this purpose, as some have been known to do, acts a most dishonest part both towards his employers and the children, as well as a most unwise one towards himself. Avoid, too, the slothful habit of attempting to study in bed; for whatever you so do will most likely have to be re-done, if not first undone. Avoid, likewise, putting such a snare upon your conscience in the way of an unbending regularity, as may tempt you to task yourself with study when you are either physically or mentally altogether unfit for it. Neither is your walking-exercise to be saddled with any such employments; for such peripatetic readings are seldom profitable, and not only destroy the real enjoyment of a country ramble, but put an end to many an improving meditation. And, of course, no conscientious teacher need here be reminded that any portion whatever of the Sabbath-day spent in such secular pursuits, and with what after all is merely a worldly end, so far from issuing in his prosperity, will generally be a forerunner of sorrow. Let, then, some portions of the balmy hours of early morning, and the tranquil ones of the early evening, usually find you at your books, with perseverance, courage, and a resolution full of hope to get on. Holidays, too, will furnish additional seasons, which should invariably be partly so employed.

And, whilst on the one hand, you try to secure silence and solitude, or at least an absence of repeated interruptions, take care that you do not prolong your studies till energy is gone, or the early hour of rest invaded.

In some such way as this, possibly, not a few of those intellectual difficulties may be remedied, to which allusion has been made. But if neglected for a season, use and "the lion in the way" will too often lead to their permanence and increase; when, as must be expected, nothing will be well done by the master in the way of duty, nothing satisfactory to his patrons, his success, or his own conscience. No one can teach what he himself does not know; and, where in no sense whatever he is "apt to teach," an incompetent person, by remaining at his post in such a state, is not only irreparably wronging many others, but grievously wronging himself. Yet when the man's intellect is cultivated, nourished, enlarged, and brought to bear on his daily duties, how soon, how delightfully, does the scene change! His own countenance beams with intelligent zeal and love; and that school, which lately seemed almost a barren waste, becomes in time the flourishing garden of the place.

3. There is a third kind of personal difficulties often besetting the path of the master, which by way of distinction may be here termed MORAL. They are such as concern "the Inner man," in all the most important considerations of the understanding and the affections, the will and the conscience. To

describe these moral obliquities, or difficulties, would be for just so long a time to take up our abode with the demoniac, amongst the tombs of whatever was at first made good in man; and in some shape or other, either of body or mind, to hold forth that dark catalogue of the works of the flesh which the inspired volume so plainly unfolds to our view. Such an enumeration would be, likewise, as fruitless as painful; for the ways of what is crooked are so varied in darkness and direction, and man's estimate of evil is generally so opposed to his Maker's, that the delusions and commixtures of its poisonous lusts are too involved in individual characters to be unravelled by human means. Hence, when the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the heart are declared in Holy Writ, the question is asked, "Who can know it?" Without, however, entering into any such details as would be more fittingly handled in another place, a few observations may be made, which will no doubt be well understood by those for whose improvement they are most kindly intended.

Whilst it is not meant to be in the most distant way so much as hinted that any of the descendants of Adam, One alone excepted, was ever free from the corruptions of sin, and which in some way or other will still remain even within the regenerated; yet it is meant to be asserted that millions of our own countrymen are the willing "servants of sin," and make no real effort to be free from its bondage. Amongst these must be numbered many teachers in our schools, though to the outward eye they may in

most respects be living what the world at large considers a blameless life. Some of these are content to remain as they are, caring nothing about such matters, so long as they seem to be prospering in health and wealth, and their ambition (be it high or low) is on the main gratified: but there are others, who feel uneasy under this burden, and whose eyes are so far opened as to perceive with pain that their usefulness as *moral trainers* of the children is utterly marred by their own habits of moral obliquity. These habits, contracted perhaps in early life, unrestrained in the shop, or counting-house, or petty school, have followed them to the more important post they now occupy; and, though perhaps not increasing in power, or detected except by a few of their more watchful patrons, are felt to be difficulties in the way of their duty, which every earnest man must long to have removed. There are but few schools, except those that have the unspeakable advantage of the daily attendance or teaching of the minister and some pious laity, that ever rise above the spirit of the master: what he is socially, morally, and religiously, the children mostly become. They are the stealthy mimics of his example: they are more or less his mirror, and distinctly present to the inquiring eye and ear, even of ordinary experience, a reflection of his principles. No wonder, then, that the now thoughtful teacher, when tracing much of the deficiency in the moral improvement of his flock to his own well-known crooked ways, should have additional cause of disquietude, as he sees one and another of his scholars

imperceptibly adopting them; and as he hears still worse results of others, now beyond his control, who have forgotten most of his lessons in the intellects, but have well remembered, both in word and deed, the example of his moral training. Though some of his good points may here and there be copied, his deformities will be an attractive pattern to corrupt human nature, however young; and, when too late, he may thus learn the unwelcome truth, that, as the old cock crows, the young one learns.

The cure of these moral delinquencies must be sought in a far higher source than any that is to be found in man. As far as he alone is concerned, "that which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered." "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"—"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" Yet is there a remedy with that Ever-blessed One, who turneth men's hearts even as the rivers of the south. He has promised to look to the humble and contrite, who draw nigh to Him for righteousness and strength; to give wisdom, without upbraiding, to all who ask it: and as at their cry even an evil father gives gifts to his children, He has declared He will pour forth His good Spirit upon all who seek it. That wisdom which cometh down from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. The fruit of that Spirit is love, joy,

peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Where these heavenly answers are given to the earnest suppliant, all such moral difficulties as are above described will come to an end — *i. e.* so far as in this fallen world they cease to perplex. But where such blessings are neither sought nor valued, there the deluded master will only become hardened in his evil indifference; and many of his poor boys will follow his pernicious ways, until at length he must meet them at that day when “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

CHAP. III.

DIFFICULTIES AS CONCERNING HIS CHARGE.

TRULY a most unpromising field of labour, either intellectual or moral, is that knot of boys and girls one meets with in the streets of large towns, and in the bye-roads of the country, at least to man's eye. Ragged, dirty, coarse, brutish, untutored in every way of good, cunning, deceitful, loutish, cruel, false, obstreperous, disobedient, passionate even to fury——where shall the black catalogue stop? Certainly, not short of the scriptural mark, drawn out by many of its inspired writers in such details of depravity, which may be generally summed up in these two of its characteristics—viz. as “hateful and hating one another,” and as having no fear of God before their eyes. Listen to their language, interspersed with many a curse and obscene word: mark their tastes and pleasures: watch their games: get into talk with them, and see how evil in some of its most revolting forms has defiled all and blighted all, like the trail of some loathsome serpent over the opening buds and flowers of spring. And if you were to accompany these baby-rebels to their respective homes, you would most likely witness in the parents still darker traits of corruption and sin; you would not wonder that children were glad to wander any

whither from such abodes of filth and misery, of idleness and vice, of violence and crime.* Here, then, generally speaking, and with the exception of a few more respectably connected, and in some measure disciplined by their friends, here are the elements with which in most cases the teachers of our infant and day-schools have to deal. In certain more favoured localities, there may be less of what is externally repulsive, or it may not be witnessed by the passer-by, but here are the children whom, by a certain set of philanthropists, the master is expected to reform, and cultivate, and convert: and, too often,

* In the evidence of Mr. Toynbee, given before the Health of Towns Commission, it is stated to have been ascertained, from a house-to-house visitation in the year 1842, that there were in the wealthy metropolitan parish of St. George, Hanover Square, 1465 families of the labouring classes, who had for their residence only 2175 rooms, and 2150 beds. When it is remembered that none of these houses possess gardens, and only a few of them even a back-yard of their own, and, besides this, that the out-buildings are usually common to several families, the filthy state in which many children of the poor are found, and their gladness to escape into the streets for air and exercise, need not be wondered at, any more than the wish of their parents to get rid of them for a time in that way. An investigation into the habits and dwellings of these classes in any large town, will present about the same results; and even in most villages, though there may be small gardens and better out-buildings, yet the sleeping-apartments will be found in nearly the same ratio, and with a like proportion of beds. It is obvious that such homes not only tend to inoculate the children with vagabond habits and manners, but that they must go very far to neutralise most of the good impressions received at school.

his labours, and those who work with him, are scoffed at by the mass, quizzed by the great, depreciated by party-spirit, and condemned by lucre-hunting journals, because, in the space of a few months, beset with unknown difficulties, they have not wrought what would almost amount to an intellectual or moral miracle. Yet still, even at the very worst, gather these poor outcast little ones into a school; let all be contrived to strike an effective blow at this monster of juvenile ignorance, obduracy, and depravity, now assembled within its walls by the unwearying sympathy and forbearance of true charity: and oh! what an undeniable change for the better will in a short time come over these hitherto neglected children! If, on all the important points of education, the managers and the master, the subscribers and inspector, be of one mind; if the situation be commodious, and the arrangements practical; if intelligence, true principles, and godliness be aimed at; what an outward change, at any rate, is eventually wrought, and in many cases the broad foundation laid for an inward and far deeper work! Never was any garden, when well dressed and tended, more sure to repay the toil of the labourer, than such a school the zealous care of its supporters. Difficulties there must, and will always exist; but these will be, in some way or other, either smoothed or over-ruled. At all events, in the performance of so noble a work, and under the guidance of such a spirit, there never was, or can be, cause for despair.

Yet it must not be forgotten what all along he, probably, has to suffer and fear, whose daily task it is to cultivate this weedy soil. None but they who have laboured in it, know rightly its fatigue and hardships, its sorrow and frequent disappointment. Difficulties, too numerous to be here even imperfectly noticed, meet him at every turn; and frequently opposition of many kinds arises, within and without the school, from the very boys themselves, to increase his perplexities, and unsettle his plans. The great enemy delights to injure and baffle the good work wherever he can; whilst the parents, or the depraved companions, of the children too often sow fresh evil, even where the old crop may have withered or been cut down. The first of these enemies may be confidently, yet humbly, met by the counter weapons of earnest prayer, and by the teaching of God's blessed word; for greater is He that is with us, than he that is against us. And though, for a season, it may be, the feet of unsuspecting children may be caught in the snares of the great fowler, yet in heaven their angels are always enrolled on their side; and it cannot be supposed that any weapons of compassion, and truth, and love, which good men may use, in the strength of the Omnipotent, will eventually prove less mighty in such a conflict than the cruel and lying devices of Satan. As to wicked parents and polluting companions, the master's own meekly consistent and pious example, and his affectionate care for the improvement of the children, will soon be observed

by them; his gentle remonstrance, his warning advice, his persuasive invitation, will seldom be despised, either by the little ones or their parents: on the contrary, the latter will be led in some measure to value his labours and enforce his authority, so that he will become a kind of second parent to their neglected offspring. But, all this notwithstanding, there will still remain a large amount of difficulties to be overcome, both with the children and their friends, conscious though they may be of the great benefits of learning and discipline: "born like a wild ass's colt," the former are unhappily too prone to forget instruction, to relapse into some of their old ways upon the first temptation, and to degrade from their apparent improvement when either the novelty of intellectual training may have worn away, or its pressure begins to be felt; whilst the latter, too often lost to every sense of responsibility, and not reaping those secular advantages they had absurdly expected, leave their wayward offspring to do as they please, or make them on all occasions the mere drudges of their idleness, covetousness, and vice. Hence, as he looks round upon his froward charge, — still, in spite of all his care, untutored and undisciplined, — and sees how little real control he is able to exercise over the moving mass of flesh and spirit before him, no wonder that the anxious master's hope frequently sinks within him, because of his labours not prospering as he thinks he had cause to expect, or as his ambition and zeal may desire. Whatever advantages

may accrue from the system, or supervision, or complete arrangements of the school, a certain series of difficulties will be sure to spring up from such sources, which cannot but tend to depress his spirit, weaken his hands, and throw uncertainty over his plans, except he is prepared to look for such things, and manfully to meet them. Hinder their approach he cannot, but mitigate and anticipate them he may; and, except their progress be arrested, a large portion of his flock will be early weaned from his care out of mere idle disgust, or enticed back into ignorance and vice by an innate love of degraded pleasures. It is not, however, so much any new plans that are wanted, as a careful and full development of those already adopted, with a persevering watchfulness of individual cases, which will release the judicious teacher from most of these difficulties, and allow a fairer field for the exercise of his energy and skill. Let him, then, look closely and constantly into the details of his own method; and keep his attention awake to a few universally received matters, such as these: —

1. **CLEANLINESS.** — Observe the state of constant irritation yonder child is in; its matted hair — its filthy flesh, save where the rules of the school compel it to be cleansed — its skin a prey to foul insects of many kinds, and here and there corroded with disease — its poor eyes and nose an unceasing torment — its clothes tattered, or so coarsely botched, or, it may be, secured with string and nails, that they will hardly hold together, soiled with nameless

dirt, and reeking with disgusting odours — his shirt a foul rag, his stockings in pieces, and his shoes scarcely clinging to his feet. Now, how can he be happy, either in body or mind? How can he quietly sit or stand where he is bid? How can he exercise any real thoughtfulness about his lessons, or help feeling that the very discipline he is under adds to his unceasing annoyance? See how, amidst constant twists and wriggles, he watches for an opportunity to scratch and pinch, to pick and rub: and probably, except the master is more fortunate than many a visitor, he will find his own clothes and person, not to mention his chairs and bedding, replete with abounding hints as to the population he has to deal with. There are, likewise, other wild-beast and menagerie nuisances which cannot here be detailed; but which, with the preceding, effectually deter many, who otherwise would do so, from rendering valuable assistance in the schools of the poor. Until these evils are met and amended, if not altogether got rid of, not only will many a cleanly and well-ordered child be removed by its friends from such contact, but it is vain to hope that the poor little squalid sufferers themselves will make much advance, either in moral or intellectual training; and, peradventure, almost as vain to expect that the teacher himself will bestow upon them the care and assistance he ought. Without, therefore, wounding the feelings of these neglected children of misery (for, indeed, they are to be deeply pitied), and without exposing them in any way to the mockery or

triumph of their neater fellow-scholars, never lose any opportunity of encouraging every cleanly habit, and of frowning upon all kinds of foul and disgusting ways. Speak privately to the little dirty ragamuffins; give them such personal and plain directions as you know they can carry out; and, where advisable, follow them up by appeals to their friends. Make a daily examination into such matters when they enter the school: commend clean linen, wholesome flesh, and neat clothes and shoes, wherever you can; at the same time, keeping at a distance from the dirty, and leaving them unnoticed, at least where the known rules are not broken. These things will soon be observed by the whole flock, who, in so easy and practical a business, will try to please you; especially, if they find that you sympathise with their poverty, and if you constantly set them a good example in your own manners, dress, and person. Recommend bathing, or constant ablutions of some sort: ask any of the well-disposed supporters of the school to give the children combs, brushes, shoes, and useful garments of any kind: get them into clothing-clubs: do all in your power to prevent them from injuring their clothes, or soiling their hands and face, whilst in school: do not permit the school-apparatus to be wilfully dirtied, or even the floor defiled: and take care that your *out-of-door* arrangements and regulations are such as will foster, not ruin, every decency. Improvement will speedily follow in the steps of such plans as these, and many of the difficulties in connection with the poor

rude children themselves will pass away ; for more cleanly minds, and clearer understandings, will usually be found to attend in the train of persevering efforts to humanise and civilise those neglected little ones, about whose bodies or souls none, perhaps, has hitherto cared. At all events, where such uncleanly and disgusting things are willingly allowed, as is too often witnessed, the master must be prepared to lose much of his time and pains, as well as to find such children leave the school earlier than others, and perhaps become ringleaders in filth and depravity ; whilst, on the other hand, by labouring to make them wholesome and clean, he will, wherever successful (as he generally must be), secure to himself that lasting respect and affectionate confidence which hundreds of teachers have rejoicingly used as stepping-stones to higher ends.

2. **DOCILITY.**—What a difference is there, even in the lowest grade of children, as to this sweet characteristic ! Some, even under the roughest exterior, are gentle, and may be moulded like wax ; others, possibly shy enough to be tolerably well-behaved, have a neck like an iron sinew. But mere natural softness of character and goodness of disposition must not be mistaken for it, as these often exist with much mulish resistance of all instruction and discipline, when their unwonted and continued pressure begins to be felt. Neither must it be taken for granted that what appears to be naturally a rugged and hardened spirit is always obstinate and unruly ; for many such children, who may have had their

better feelings stifled by the harsh conduct of unnatural parents, yield at once beneath the glow of sympathy and gentle treatment. In all cases, however, where no such teachableness of spirit exists, where obedience to plain directions is resisted, though secretly and passively, there the master's instructions and training must, for the greater part, be thrown away: hence his attention and efforts should be constantly aimed at the formation, or encouragement, of every degree of docility, that the ground may be the more hopefully prepared for the good seed he thinks to scatter. When this sweet teachableness of spirit is once formed, or even budding, then every lesson and reproof begins to tell: much, indeed, will be forgotten and neglected by reason of past habits of sloth and obduracy, as well as from actual lack of cultivation; but, generally speaking, wilful resistance will have given way to an interested and respectful attention. Let it, then, be a chief object of your care to acquaint yourself with every disposition and temper, every mind and constitution, every intellect and habit, upon which you have to work; a task which, though it may seem hard and tedious, is much sooner accomplished by persevering, watchful attention, than is supposed by the mere jog-trot master. It is but of little use attempting to teach and train in platoon, or by some granite-formed rule, that cannot bend to the thousand-and-one varieties of human character exhibited in the schools of the poor, as much as in the higher area of society; just as though all were alike,—from the sharp, but morose

and spiteful urchin, with whom you almost dread an encounter, to the frank-hearted, yet idle and blundering rogue, that still smiles whenever he looks upon you, reprove him how you will. Let the children know you are sincere and earnest in your endeavours to reform and instruct them: let them see you are patient and impartial, firm and consistent, watchful and inquiring: let them feel you are their true friend, and wish to do them good, by your constantly studying their best interests, and respecting their feelings. Sympathise with all in their up-hill work, whether of intellect or temper: help the dull along, and bear with the self-convicted, froward ones: assist them, when and how you safely can, to master themselves or their tasks: gently open their mental powers: give them weapons to fight against evil. Lay aside every hectoring appearance, and condescend to the wants of the weakest and worst of your fold. Do not seem to hear and see everything. Give them all the knowledge you can, independent of their books, as you pass through the day; that they may in some measure be attracted by learning, and be provoked to a laudable curiosity and thirst for instruction. See that they have a fitting library; recommend to each suitable books, and a way to read them; get such as are able, to write out short extracts for you, or themselves, or their friends. By these and many other means which will present themselves in this important part of the work, you will, probably, engender, or at least develop, such a

confiding, teachable spirit, as may tend to make all your more serious labours tenfold more pleasant and effective. But avoid all harshness, even in words: be decided and inflexible where advisable, even in punishments, if such be necessary; but, depend upon it, few hearts are won, or tempers improved, by scolding and the rod. Impatience, violence, and the birch constitute but a mean plea for indolence or want of temper and judgment; and, in the end, they are generally found, not only to be a most sorry substitute for true efficiency and zeal, but too often the unhappy means of hardening and brutalising the hearts of the young. Speak privately to the poor little culprit; realise his disadvantages and inward temptations; reason with him as with your own child; wear him out by persevering kindness; teach him a more excellent way to the very last; and no doubt you will find your reward after many days.

3. PROGRESS.—There is no such thing as being “at a stand-still” in school-work. Not to advance, is to degrade; where no such progress is made as is easily tested, there, whatever be the plea, must be decline. What is so commonly called “stagnation” in such matters, is not merely an absence of advance; for if the scholars have not progressed in intelligence and character during the past month, then are they a month worse than they were: such stagnation, therefore, is incipient decay, and, except it be watched against and resolutely met, it will, by slow and imperceptible degrees perhaps, end in the ruin of all true and enlarged education. Hence, the

earnest master does well to keep his eye constantly fixed on this gauge of his labours, and will never feel happy when it seems to be pointing the wrong way; such a state of things will lead him anxiously to investigate the causes, and recover lost ground, if he can: whilst those easy-going teachers who adopt no such method of testing the result of their duties, are either surprised by the accidental discovery (if some visitor did not first inform them of the fact), or else, through their own inefficiency and love of ease, observe neither its rise nor increase. But though a persevering watchfulness over the progress of the scholars cannot fail materially to diminish the master's difficulties concerning them, how seldom is it realised by himself or the managers as they could wish and had expected! The truth is, some expect more, others less, than they are warranted to do from the means employed: and yet, where the whole machine is well-constructed and kept properly going, how surely is its effectiveness seen, if not by the teacher whose daily task it is to tend it, at least by the visitor or inspector when looking into results! Where a definite mark of progress is laid down for the whole institution, be it in books, in the general routine of work, or in conduct and character, it is easily detected how near to the mark the bolt has gone; and even where the aim has been too high for complete success, far more will have been gained, than by such as aim low, or have no aim at all. But if you have fears that no real progress is being made, examine how far your apprehensions are just.

Are you advancing as fast as is safe for the solidity of your work, or as your own strength and experience, as the number in your charge, your educational machinery, and the degree of intelligence in the children allow? Get some judicious friend to watch this matter for you: for, perhaps, you may be judging too hardly, or fondly looking for too much success. If, on the other hand, you have good reason to be dissatisfied, let amendment at once commence; stir up the energies of your boys, have stated examinations by any visitor who will take the trouble, look well into the working details of your system, and make what improvements you can. If you can advise with the clergy, or committee, or inspector, do so, and sedulously follow their recommendations wherever you find you are able. See if anything can be altered for the better in yourself, or in any of your pet plans, as to hours, method, monitorial or personal instruction, and slavishness to mere order: for many a school presents the painful contrast of a high state of apparent discipline, great external decorum, and excellent movements, with lamentable failure in every branch of useful instruction. Possibly you have hitherto been somewhat remiss in the amount of your own daily teaching of the children; or, it may be, have neglected that *daily preparation* which should be made, before meeting a class, by every master who hopes either to win the confidence or inform the minds of his pupils. If you are all confusion and uncertainty, so will they be: for how can you communicate that which is

not known to yourself without groping and poring over the pages of the manual in your hand? If the class saw you ogling the multiplication-table before you were able to declare that twice five is ten, what would they think of your arithmetical knowledge? And if they see you as busily informing yourself, from a book before you, on any points in scriptural, scientific, or general knowledge, before you venture to teach or question them (and be assured their little eyes will see it), what conclusion can they come to, but that without such help you know as little as they? If such neglect of daily preparation has been your snare, no wonder that the flock makes little progress in any important subject; and be assured, that until you alter your ways, and prepare beforehand for the due discharge of your daily duties, as every public teacher of any account is wont to do, you must expect no other result. But if you have not run into this too common error of personal neglect, and have all along been able and accustomed to instruct the classes accurately, from the stores previously laid up in your own mind, then the want of progress must be traced to other causes, which cannot long escape notice, when your vigilance has been once awakened to the fact. Do not, therefore, lose your courage, but patiently wait, like the husbandman, for the seed to bud and bring forth: perhaps, even now, others may observe what you do not; and if your own personal duties are being thus carefully as watchfully performed, the seemingly sluggish ground may be

preparing for a larger harvest than you had even hoped for.

4. RESULTS.—These are generally living evidences of the skill and success of their labours, or else the contrary, to which all practical men engaged in promoting the real education of the humbler classes cannot but look; many, perhaps, far more anxiously and immaturely than they should. Of course, those of our countrymen who are hostile to such plans of benevolence and sound policy point to the apparent failures (unhappily too numerous) which come across them in the shape of idle, vicious, or ungovernable young men, as so many witnesses to the folly of “attempting to turn society upside down:” yet all that such cases generally prove is this, the impossibility of rightly training the lowest grades of society in a period of eighteen months (which is considerably more than the average of the time such runagates have spent in school), or training them with the means employed in their case. It might, then, well be asked in reply, how it would fare with the upper classes, if educated and trained in the same time and way.*

* The whole time allowed out of the life of a poor child for its schooling is all too short, and, unhappily, it appears to be daily decreasing. According to the returns of the Government Inspectors, the average attendance, even in those elementary schools they visit, is about one year and a half. As concerns the proficiency of the scholars, they find one in six of the whole number able to read in the Holy Scriptures with tolerable ease and correctness; one in three reading easy narratives; and the remainder (*i. e.* one half) reading letters and monosyllables. About one in four are learning to write on paper, and one in

Results, however, there are of every school, and of every educational system, even after you have balanced the account as you will: and that master is truly a wise man, and in the way to guard against future failures, who watches these results with a jealous eye, and compares them with former anticipations. It is feared that very few of our teachers either know or care much about their scholars, when once severed from their charge: and, out of the rest who may keep an eye on them when embarked in the duties of life, and who may hear of, or witness, their sloth or dirt, their dishonesty or vice, their breach of social ties, their cruelty, sedition, Sabbath-breaking, and ungodliness,—though indeed they are able to say, “That is only what I expected,”—how few make such painful cases beacons against future failures, either in the children or themselves! Yet, by so doing, many of those difficulties might be effectually provided against which beset them in connection with their charge; there would be more personal attention to the displays of individual character, more control of individual temper and passions, more earnest and affectionate advice to individual

three are being taught arithmetic; of the last-mentioned, one in four are in the first four rules, one in fifteen in the compound rules, and one in sixty are advanced as far as the Rule of Three. Not much more than one in twenty of the whole population avail themselves of the benefit of these schools, though, from the census, it would seem that one out of every four is of an age to go to school (from three to thirteen); the schools are mostly one half full; and the average age of the children is between seven and eight years.

offenders. The master would gain an enlarged and more benevolent experience; the pupils, better training; and the country, a more hopeful population. — There is, however, a worthy band of thoughtful and anxious teachers, who do constantly look out for results, and this the more earnestly as they are imbued with a right spirit. They cannot rest satisfied merely with the ordinary approval of their employers, the examination-nod of the inspector, or even the voice of their own conscience, that duty has on the main been honestly discharged according to their ability. They will still investigate results. Have the children really improved in what is truly useful and good during the time they have been under the teacher's hands? Oh, what a disappointing answer does such an inquiry usually meet! The miserable dunces, the half-taught, the ill-mannered, the loutish, that pass him without notice, — the crowd that is ignorant of religious truth, and living "without God in the world:" — here are discouragements indeed!* Yet,

* The statistics of crime seem to prove that this miserably instructed class of beings, if not more vicious than any other in its calendar, are at any rate more numerous than all the others combined. In the year 1847, out of the whole number of those who were committed for trial, 59 per cent were able to read and write imperfectly; 31 per cent were quite ignorant; and only 0·28 per cent had a superior education. This return tends to show how radically defective in its chief elements must be that instruction which is given in the greater number of the schools in our country. Whatever may be professed, reading, writing, and arithmetic are the only matters which are actually taught; these, too, in a very shallow and imperfect

wherefore should any look for satisfactory results in all; satisfactory, that is, as concerns their benevolent purposes and desires? Was it at all likely, constituted as society is, and with the awfully neglected children sent to you for instruction and discipline, with the ruinous hindrances on every side, that the extreme result, even of moderate success, was to be looked for in every case? If you have been diligent and faithful, all have gained something: all must in some degree have profited, socially or intellectually, morally or religiously, however brief their school career may have been: all have heard the way to be wise and good: and all, for aught man can tell, have carried away that which, though now covered with the almost darkness of heathenism, may yet spring up into light and life. The end is not always to be seen here: duties and opportunities

way; and hence, probably, it is, that so many persons are opposed to the education of the poor, because, from its apparent fruits, they are led to confound what are merely mechanical attainments with those which are moral. It certainly is not education, but the want of education, which produces crime, as well as many minor immoralities, insubordination, conceit, disinclination to labour and industry. Neither is it the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic, to the lower orders, that leads to such a painful state of things as is above recorded; but teaching them superficially, and teaching nothing else. For, however well these branches of instruction may be attended to in any school, and however well they may be learned, yet it has been well observed that they can no more make a good man than a crucible can make a chemist, or a plough a ploughman.

are ours, results are God's. He can make the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose, when and where He pleases. Meanwhile He has solemnly declared, "My word shall not return to me void;"—and likewise that the righteous employer of any talents in His service, shall, in due season, be commended as a "good and faithful servant." Whatever, therefore, be the discouragements of the anxious and prayerful master, when sorrowing over such failures, let him still gird up his loins for greater efforts in so good a cause; and, looking on high for wisdom and strength, let him remember how sure is the promise, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy!"

CHAP. IV.

DIFFICULTIES ABOUT COMMITTEES.

THE term Committee is not meant to be here used in any technical, offensive, or dogmatic sense; but, from want of a more general one, it is adopted merely to distinguish the ruling power of a school—whether one person or many—whether ministerial or lay, or both united. Nor is any opinion about to be defended, or so much as adopted, in regard to the constitution, or management: it is sufficient for the purpose of the annexed observations, that the establishment is so managed by a governing body independent of the master; otherwise, if, unhappily, you yourself should, in fact, be both manager and teacher, there is every reason to fear that both offices will be neglected, mimicked, and marred. On the other hand, where there is a substantial and effective management, however formed, all you have to do in the matter is, honestly and consistently to regard it: you are their instrument, to work with; their servant, to carry out their plans and wishes; their general, to fight their battles with youthful ignorance and vice; their representative, to illustrate and maintain the good principles in which you are all enlisted; their almoner, to bestow what is better than silver or gold,—viz. a good education. It would, therefore, be well for you, and no doubt many

have done so, to withdraw your eyes from the conflicting and party views of this tangled question about management; never to degrade your peaceful and noble office as a mere tool of faction, whether on this side or that; but rather, to consider your own calling as something wholly distinct from such work, and far higher, which if rightly viewed can never be materially hurt, provided you do your duty as in the sight of God. It may be, that by inheritance or training, if not from example, influence, or apparent self-interest, you have strong political or ecclesiastical *party* feelings on one side or other; yet, if you would be a peaceful, useful, and regenerating man, get rid of these party irritants at almost any cost, and for ever. They will only disturb or vex you, embroil and disappoint you, if they do not eventually ruin the accomplishment of that great end to which you are accounted to have devoted your life. Keep this important purpose always in view, with steady consistency, and then, whatever may be the management, it will, most likely, be largely attained: if you are competent to the office, your school will then prosper, you will be loved by the children, trusted by your employers, respected by your own conscience, and honoured by God. Who has not repeatedly seen cases of the best management, and the most approved system, with admirable apparatus, where, notwithstanding, everything in the school worthy the name of education has been truly miserable: whilst, on the other hand, where these things have been most defective, there

oftentimes, as it were in spite of such wants, all that is valuable prospers? The fact is, everything of that kind is mainly dependent on the master. If he be careless or self-satisfied, time-serving or ungodly, there is his mirror in the wretched flock; if he be sincere and laborious, self-denying and consistently pious, there, within the same four walls, is the earnest of his own rich reward, and there is the hope of the parish, and of the Future. Where intelligence, uprightness, and true holiness meet in his own character, the management is of little consequence, and will seldom affect him; but where these essentials are wanting, it is convenient to the inefficient to quarrel with anything, and blame any one, until they abandon a trust they seem only to abuse. But it is notorious to every practical friend of education, that, somehow or other, difficulties do spring up between committees and masters, and these not mere slight hitches or skirmishes, but of a serious and lasting sort: dissatisfaction, heartburnings, jealousies, suspicions, disunion, divisions, partings, do arise in a way, and from causes, one would little expect. Why should they? Surely both parties have one end and interest. How can they, each having such distinct duties, if the straight path be duly kept? Moreover, how can the good cause prosper, when the house is thus divided against itself? or whence shall come that blessing which is commanded to descend only where brethren dwell together in unity? Let us look a little into the matter.

1. At the CAUSES.—These are not all on one side, any more than of one kind: they are divided between the two litigant parties, generally speaking; and, therefore, the blame and the responsibility must be divided likewise. No doubt, there are instances where a thoroughly incompetent, savage, or immoral master must at all cost either be improved with an effective and iron hand, or else summarily got rid of: gentlemen would be traitors to their country and the church at large, as well as most unjust stewards in the sight of God, to allow their money and influence, their opportunities and efforts, to be thus neutralised by a foolish or unprincipled person, whilst the poor children were either deliberately robbed of their advantages, or infected with error and vice. But it is confidently hoped that such cases are now far more rare than formerly; although, if common report be true, a new and unlooked-for class of miseries in this line is being rapidly developed; a seed evidently sown by the great enemy, to thwart the progressing labours of true Christian patriots. Again: there is as little doubt that instances may be found, where an unwise, or political, or close-fisted, or timorous, or overbearing committee may have so conducted themselves, as to curb and thwart, to weaken and dispirit, to oppress and disgust, their master; until, worn-out by their crotchets, his own mind and temper injured, his conscience sullied, his charge degrading, he is provoked to retire from such a cabal, perhaps after many a painful scene. Now, albeit these lines are not written for

committees, but for you to whom they are addressed, yet, that some of their ways may be amended, and that your own case may be met as well in the fairest as the worst view, it may be as well to limn a few hasty draughts of hindrances, difficulties, and provocations, on their side. There is, then, to be found in their ranks, 1. *The Martinet*: all order, no eye or ear for anything else; nice to a shaving in every turn of discipline, with some new curbing and lacing either for master or boys. The good man thinks more about bowing and scraping, than hymns and chapters; and when obliged to listen to these, he is never satisfied with any performance, and never pleased but when deploring the unpalatable training. 2. *The Busybody*: who is always interfering in matters out of his path, if not out of his understanding; fiddling with the apparatus; tattling about all things with the parents or subscribers or managers; always suggesting more work for the children, inquiring into petty details of discipline or character, and setting the teacher some laborious task which he well knows must abridge his leisure. 3. *The Scatterbrain*: without any defined idea about schools, excepting that he is a Manager; rushing periodically through the room like a storm, confusing the pupils, bothering the master, throwing books and maps, classes and time, equally into disorder; and when matters are in an agreeable tangle, suddenly, amidst the tittering of the boys, leaving without a word of apology, for any who will to restore quiet and order. 4. *The Indifferent*: anything

will do, anything will please him, anything is good enough; if there be but a school to meet the monstrous prejudices of the day, to silence the outcry for learning, and to put down the rabble. Our friend cares nothing about the master or his talents, provided he is civil, does not get drunk, and keeps his distance; nor does he mind how much or how little the scholars know, if they are kept quiet out of doors, taught proper respect, and too much expense or responsibility is not incurred. 5. *The Visionary*: a great pleader for experiments, snuffing at what is old, and hunting out every new scheme from all quarters, however impracticable or unsafe; always dreaming of success to be reaped from this new plan and that alteration, which he foists on the committee; devising improvements whose rehearsal distracts the master, and, if adopted, would summarily ruin the school; and discovering a remedy for every apparent failure or miscarriage, with which he perplexes or taunts the unlucky person who convinces his unwilling pericranium that all will soon right itself. 6. *The Drag*: his delight is to check an enlarged education, to abuse maps and diagrams, easels and drawings; he scouts grammar, geography, history, and everything like scientific knowledge. The good man's views are all of a utilitarian kind, or, as he pleases to fancy, "old-fashioned;" and so he thinks the master too fine, and the scholars too knowing; he recommends that the boys be taught knitting and to plait straw, that they may make their own stockings and hats. Shoe-making, rug-making, and any such

industrial training, ought, as he says, to occupy the place of these nonsensical books, and he has no doubt that, by proper management, the master and boys might keep all the school-buildings in thorough repair. 7. *The Hector*: he is all for obedience and implicit submission, even in the smallest particulars; his system is a word and a blow, and in the education of the poor he has far more confidence in flogging than learning; he would break them all in to the bit and curb from their mothers' milk, and make them know their station, or their backs should tell a tale; he would reduce the teacher's salary one half, and put him in livery; and as to all the fuss about apparatus, only take care that there are proper tools to leather the saucy with, and the school would do wonders. 8. *The Patron*: whose admiration of the master is unbounded, and, if not told him in words, is proved to him by deeds; he can see no fault in him, or rather, what others think grievous drawbacks, he laughs at or lauds; he employs him whenever he can, and would persuade others to do so too; he pays him many a visit, and leaves him many a gift; he tells him all sorts of things in confidence, finds fault with colleagues, and chalks out the advisable course in many a trying turn of school-politics; compliments and excuses, douceurs and holidays, are tried to be doled out to his pet in committee; and when the poor unlucky teacher has been thus spoiled by attentions he cannot bear, his top-heavy, impertinent bearing to all others than his

patron is defended, and sometimes commended, at the hazard of a general fracas, and the ruin both of master and school. 9. *The Crowder*: thinks the popular movement ought to be spiritedly met, and the million to be educated; his ambition is always to have a full room,—aye, to the very walls; he thinks more about the number than the learning of the flock; he is a diligent visitor of bye-lanes and lone cottages, wherever he suspects a scholar is to be had, and often pays the weekly pence, rather than the unwilling dunce should stay away. He is a fond promoter of treats and shows, and displaying on Sundays the lengthening ranks of ignorant urchins, whom no one master could properly teach; and, without a thought of what is in their heads or hearts, points triumphantly to the results of such doings, and says, “There’s a noble school!”—Others like these there are; but we will see no more.

Now, how much trouble such gentlemen may give, two or three perhaps every month, if not weekly, enforcing their opposite practices and opinions—how many seasons of irritation and provocation they may evoke—how many prospects or plans of doing good they may destroy—none know save those masters who have had to endure the harlequinade of such an ordeal. Where such a state of things prevails in any managing body of trustees or directors, or where for any length of time it is allowed to operate mischievously, even through one of its members, troubles can hardly fail to arise. But it is very doubtful whether such examples of froward indis-

cretion are often now met with, except in harmless instances of great talkers and little doers. Most assuredly the many are not so. Why should they stultify their own declared principles, or thwart their cherished purpose? Why should they give their money and influence for a noble end, and then employ means to defeat it? The fact is, whatever may be the peculiar, and, if you will, the absurd, opinions on certain points of any committee, or portion of it, they exhibit vastly more excellencies. We are all only too prone to see the mote in our brother's eye, but to forget the beam in our own; and there is a special pleasure found by some tempers to get hold of a supposed failing in a superior, to stick it on a pin, look at it through a microscope, and then excuse themselves from some point of duty. If, however, it so happen that all the management is virtually centred in one person, and he, moreover, have strange views of some matters, which are as determinately carried out, it rarely happens but that many most notable points of judgment and goodness are found at bottom, which are never rightly seen, because the master's want of ingenuousness, confidence, and self-knowledge blinds his eyes.

It is now time to reverse the picture; for, after all that may be said about trustees and managers, with their crotchets, and inexperience, and overbearing, it is a transparent fact that in the great majority of cases, and in the first instance, the cause of these unseemly divisions and difficulties with your

superiors springs from yourselves. Instead of remembering your own true and evident position, which no gloss or subterfuge can explain away, you try to make a new and false one, if not overtly, at least in your own mind: and when you observe, upon any trial of its working, that others repudiate the novelty, your feelings and dignity, your self-conceit and mettle, are quickly offended. You forget that you are the employed, not the employer; and that, whatever be your own estimate of your own talents and eminence, you are bound by every consideration of truth and equity to submit, even where you do not like it, to everything that is not sinful, or unlawful, or contrary to your agreement. Whatever be the rank of the employed, or the duty annexed, servants are to "submit themselves to their masters, whether gentle or froward;" and, indeed, that society of men can never truly prosper, be it a commonwealth or be it a school, where all are not "subject one to another, and clothed with humility." You may inwardly or outwardly rebel against these exalted principles: but if so, farewell to your own conscience and self-respect! farewell to all esteem and confidence in your patrons! farewell to your little flock growing up in peaceful virtue and love! farewell to your own usefulness in the cause of true and undefiled religion! For "the meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way." Again, why are your committee not to have a prejudice, a wish, a conviction, a determination — or if you please, a whim, and even

a blunder — as well as you? Who commissioned you to sit in judgment on their schemes, and to make yourself accountable for their decisions? They are really the responsible party, both to the parents and before the world, for the course they adopt, though you may be the instrument they use. Looking with a scrutinising eye at what is going on in the world, surely they may claim to know what they mean to do: brought up with certain advantages, and in a position to use them for the good of their country, why should they be put down because you think otherwise than they? Examining into the wants or capabilities of their neighbourhood, and what seems most expedient, why are they to be debarred from carrying out their conclusions on account of your opinion as to what should be done? Watching the operations of the school, themselves experiencing its working, and hearing its results from others, are they not bound to decide on this or that, in matters so clearly within their own right, without asking your consent? Should you, nevertheless, rashly forsake your own path of duties, sufficiently engrossing and responsible as they are, to interfere with theirs, collision must ensue; then, probably, you will be tempted to yield to temper, suspicion, pride, rudeness, opposition, and cabal; and so, Pandora's box once opened, who can say when and how it shall be closed?

2. THE PREVENTION of such difficulties is so much better than viewing their rise with indifference, or imagining they will in the end supply an antidote

to their own poison, that here should be centred your chief efforts at peace, harmony, and unity with your governors, whoever they may be, and whatever you may think them. Do not fancy or forebode these evils; do not invite, or deride, or provoke them; do not meet them half-way, with menaces or manœuvres; rather tax your own ingenuity and self-control, to see in what manner their course may be so diverted as to vex no one, and to leave the good cause uninjured. Now, consider, if you have a door of laborious usefulness opened to you in such a station as that you occupy, do you expect that the enemy from within, and the old tempter from without, would not gladly close it by evoking any natural corruptions you do not guard against, and so mar the great end of your calling, and strip you of the reward? If you are really competent to the post—single-minded, sincere, gentle, self-controlled, pious,—what harm can all these management whims and caprices (as they are usually termed) do to you, or to any of your reasonable expectations? What does it matter whether this system, or that—this plan and arrangement, or the other—this apparatus, desk, book, or those—be adopted? *you* are the fire that works the otherwise useless machinery; you are the spirit that enlivens the carcass; and with you it still remains whether or not you will faithfully discharge the well-known duties of your calling, and whether your scholars shall, by their proficiency, do credit to your labours. You are, or ought to be, a man of knowledge, not of mere title-pages; of

principles, not surfaces; of skill to fashion your rough materials, not of slavish dependence upon some familiar tool; so that, if for six hours a day during five days in the week, your own mind is left to act upon the minds of the children, they must advance in knowledge and virtue, be the pressure on you what it will, if you yourself are truly qualified to lead them in these paths. Whenever, therefore, you are thus provoked, or thwarted, or injured, as you may feel it, let the storm blow over your head; and, instead of giving way to momentary resentment or opposition, watch for a fitting opportunity to speak alone to the offender (as you count him), calmly, thoughtfully, respectfully, and with some self-suspicion. Represent to him your doubts, difficulties, fears, experience, and rights touching the matter in hand; show yourself most willing to do and to try anything that is for the common advantage; lay aside all mere selfish wilfulness (the "I will" and "I won't" of unbridled childhood), and meet the party in a spirit becoming your lower rank and your peculiar calling. By coolly reasoning over details, get him to sit in judgment on the probable results of his scheme; lay the truth, as it appears to you, at the door of his conscience—for if truth, then it must eventually enter in: and if at length you cannot come to a desirable agreement, then quietly leave the burden of his own blunders to be borne by himself; attend to your own responsibilities and leave others to theirs. Resolve that you will have no bickerings or differences with your employers, especially on

doubtful and indifferent points, and in matters which are more their province than your own, at any rate in their opinion. Perhaps it is just the most high-minded and energetic, the most anxious and best informed, that may come most athwart your views; and, by your bad temper, or conduct, or bearing, you may for ever alienate, disgust, and remove from active exertion in the field of your own toil the very man who would have fought your battles and the good fight of education more manfully than all the others who may leave you alone in your fancied glory. Cultivate, therefore, every adviser, even where the advice is questionable, or the tone magniloquent. Understand the real wishes of your managers, and further them heartily and intelligently, where it is not absurd or morally wrong to do so. Have no reservations or secrets from them in the exercise of those scholastic duties and opinions which ought equally to concern your common interests. Hate everything like sham and shuffle, pretence and subterfuge, varnish and guile. Beware of encouraging a morbid conscience, or suspicious and dissatisfied tempers, as well as of sharing in any party spirit dividing your committee. Mistrust yourself, your supposed judgment, wisdom, zeal, simplicity of purpose, purity of heart. Put to flight all pertness, obstinacy, and nonchalance. Imagine your relative positions changed, and do as you would be done by. Be long-suffering and lowly; regarding the end of all things more than the self-pleasing of to-day. Look upwards for a right spirit, as well as for guid-

ance in the right way; and so, none of these things will much move you.

3. **THE CURE** of these difficulties, where they are rampant. Oh! how many a contending party, now that they see their error, and its ruinous consequences to education and charity, would give much for such a panacea, and suffer much could they undo the past! Yet surely something might be devised or tried, were it not for the littleness or pride of corrupt nature, and the rash indifference of coarse and irreligious minds. No doubt, there are some instances where, the mischief of these vexatious collisions having reached a certain extent of still increasing evil, the only cure is separation. Both parties may be so mutually disgusted and shocked, that their antipathy is apparently unalterable. In such unhappy cases the weaker side must go to the wall: and though, for a time, the master, by dint of circumstances, may be the victorious party, yet eventually he must lose the day; for, in the natural course of things, none, even of his former associates in the broil, will be disposed to trust him, or risk their own peace and wishes for the sake of a contentious servant. If, therefore, this should be your own lot, lose no time. Life is fast ebbing away; and but few years, at the most, — it may be only months, — await you, wherein you can either get that good you haply may deeply need, or do that good to which you are considered to have given your days. For your own sake, then, under every view of it, for the sake of the committee, of the

children, of the noble cause of education, seek another charge, and other patrons, and a distant sphere of duty, where you may profit in many ways by past failures.

On the other hand, if the flame of discord have not destroyed every hope of unity and love, extinguish the blazing torch as far as in you lies. Consider no means too little, no efforts too manifold and earnest, no self-denial too painful. Look at the consequences of your own share of the miseries which are on every side, in the light wherein they may be seen in your last hours, and stay their plague while you can. Much, of course, is out of your power; so far, that is, as compelling your committee to meet you in a like spirit: yet, where you have not so conducted matters as to make reconciliation hopeless, there is every reason to expect, as soon as your altered spirit is known and trusted, that you will not labour after peace single-handed or in vain. All you can do with any certainty is with yourself. Begin resolutely to retrace every step that was wrong; admit candidly where you were in error; confess your faults in this particular or that, where conscience whispers you were to be deservedly blamed; withdraw every undue, or impertinent, or equivocal claim; correct, privately, whatever impressions your pride and self-will may have made upon any of the committee, by such an explanation of your present hopes and endeavours, as, without any appearance of servility, will only raise you in their esteem. Depend upon it, no

gentleman who feels that benevolent sympathy for the poor and ignorant which your committee affect to do, can wish either your degradation or unhappiness: and when you have only so far won their confidence, as to assure them you will give up your annoyances, and your opposition to their wishes as the natural and legitimate rulers of their own institution, they will gladly covenant with you to restore harmony and good understanding. Let the whole body of them see that you are now anxious to be watchful over yourself, to repair whatever breaches may have been made by your own fretfulness, impatience, and rudeness, and in all ways to avoid giving cause of offence to any of them. Endeavour to secure the good offices of those who are less alienated from you, or who may seem to be most imbued with the spirit of peacemakers; and ask advice from the gentle, the zealous, the religious. Thus may you expect not only to recover much—if not all—of your former position in the good esteem of your friends, and to bring back a happy spirit of concord and unity into your whole proceedings; but to disarm those who perhaps held you more aloof than they should, and enforced matters upon you which were too indifferent to have risked an explosion for, or which, if in their opinion most important, it had been more politic to have delayed till your assistance had been gained, or you had been led in a friendly and consistently respectful manner to resign your office. It may be a work of time, as well as a trial of your forbearance

and sincerity; for the wise king has told us that "a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." But if, in a spirit of meekness and self-discipline, you seek peace and ensue it; if, where you have run into folly and error, you resolve to do so no more; and, above all, if you supplicate His assistance without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, you will hardly fail to see every cloud of discord in the end vanish away. Yet, even though all be not as bright and harmonious as once it was—and where disputings have been high and of long standing, perhaps such a complete restoration of charity is less commonly witnessed; though perhaps some traces of coldness, reserve, and want of sympathy may still be left; yet, be content to have all the main difficulties in the way of unity and peace, of active usefulness and brotherly love, thus happily removed. What is permitted to remain, it may be, is wisely left, to humble, to quicken, to purify you in your important duties.

CHAP. V.

DIFFICULTIES WITH PUPIL-TEACHERS.

THIS is a matter which concerns far fewer masters than one could wish it did, by reason of the small number of institutions wherein, as yet, pupil-teachers have been introduced. Speaking generally, no elementary school of any size or character, where only one teacher is employed, can be efficiently or satisfactorily worked, so as duly to employ the time and means within his power, or properly to develop the intellectual faculties of the children, and to give them the fullest possible advantage of watchful moral training. The master's energies and opportunities are not equal to such distracting duties, many of which constantly demand his attention at the same time. He cannot be ubiquitous: he is unwilling himself to neglect the elder scholars for the little ones, yet he feels the vast importance of laying a good foundation in the youngest classes; consequently, both are in a measure attended to, and, therefore, in each many most important things are passed by. Or else, where from his skill and experience, or the lower standard of the school, this is not the case, either the intellect is cultivated at the expense of the heart, or a certain kind of moral and religious training is attempted, without a

corresponding instruction of the mind. The utter hopelessness of accomplishing as much as was desirable, and so to speak within grasp of the managers of elementary schools for the poor, led, many years ago, to the adoption of various plans by way of mitigating the evil so frequently felt: such as a young assistant, or, where practicable, a second and inferior teacher; allowing the master to have apprentices articulated to him, or inducing the parents of some of the cleverer boys to let them stay at school, and give assistance for a small weekly consideration; each of which was tried, according to the finances or expectations of the parties. Whatever may have been the success of these schemes, their progress has been materially arrested by the Government plan of pupil-teachers; and, eventually, as it would seem, they will disappear before it, especially if prejudice and party spirit can be taken out of the way. However this may be, the introduction of such assistants, whether of one kind or another, into his school, whilst it may, on the one hand, considerably have abridged the master's drudgery, has much added to his difficulties and responsibility; and so, many of the hints contained in this chapter will probably apply to such as are still working on under the old make-shift devices, as well as to those who are fully embarked in a trial of the new. For it should be borne in mind, that, however superior to all the former schemes that of the Committee of Council may be (as, indeed, it possesses elements of excellence to which they never could have attained), it is, not-

withstanding, attended with some of the troubles besetting its predecessors, as well as with a few new dangers peculiar to its own wider range. Moreover, it is not to be expected that, even yet, after some trial and the introduction of certain amendments, it will altogether answer the wishes either of its promoters, or of the committees who have adopted it, for a few years to come; at any rate, not to the extent of which it is capable, and which some of its more sanguine friends anticipated. The two chief hindrances in the way of its more complete success, are just those which were looked for from the first, though probably not to the full amount in which they have been gradually developed. One of these exists in the children themselves who are to be chosen to the new office, and who, as a whole, are a bad stock for the purpose, though perhaps the best the school affords, and, it may be, selected with great care in regard to home-examples. Yet, looking to the mass of them, they are truly an indifferent lot, the relics of old systems, or no-systems, under which they have often grown up ill-taught and ill-trained for their important task. The prospective honours of their novel calling, therefore, not unfrequently lead to unlooked-for difficulties with the pride and corruptions of the pupil-teachers themselves, or the vices of their disappointed, money-seeking parents. Another cause of failure, it is well known, has too commonly arisen from the masters of schools being called upon to exercise new duties and powers, for which in their turn,

likewise, they were mostly ill-prepared: in some cases, wholly untaught, except in a few most common things, or such as were absolutely necessary, and were hastily got up to qualify them for their new position; in other cases, most inefficient as teachers, save of the very elements, and, being too often themselves undisciplined, but little likely to discipline others; and, in all cases, inexperienced to use these new instruments. Hence, too many teachers not being wary, not diligent or persevering, not single-eyed in regard to these dependent helpers, the workman and the tool must jointly miss the hoped-for end of their labours. Disappointments and difficulties spring up when and where it was least expected, and of a kind not quickly, if ever, to be remedied. There are neglects, objurgations, and sundry crooked doings on each side; then follows the utter unprofitableness of the pupil-teacher for his work, failure in his examinations, possibly some moral delinquency, and finally the quashing of his indentures; or even, if he completes the term, he has become thoroughly disgusted with school-work, and the managers of the school have taken fright at the whole plan.

But whatever be the apparent or presumed difficulties in this matter, and whencesoever they may spring, they are not in the least likely to get ahead and do much mischief where sound prudence, determined industry, and integrity of principle guide the master. Before a manly teaching and training of himself, much of his own unfitness for this new work will rapidly disappear: whilst as to the pupil-

teachers, let him only faithfully make a good beginning with them, and persevere in the course prescribed, and though it may be true, that "a silk purse is not to be made out of a sow's ear," yet more will be done—and that in a little while—than he looks for, even in the worst cases. A good workman, in any department, will often make an excellent show with but sorry tools, and will, probably, improve both them and himself as he goes along, provided he keeps his eye upon the satisfactory appearance and the final completion of his work. In like manner, whatever be the repeated dangers, or the real difficulties, connected with this most interesting class of young people, you will find them all mainly vanish, in proportion as you keep your attention fixed on your properly employing, teaching, and training them.

1. Their **USEFULNESS** and due employment well deserve your constant consideration. Not that, under any view, they are useless, as the disappointed affirm; or worse than useless, as enemies say; or that they are to be used as door-mats for the master's temper, and idleness, and whims: but you will strive to discover how you can make them most useful to yourself and your whole flock in working out some of the important ends which your patrons contemplate in maintaining your institution. You will puzzle out the best way of managing their time and talents; so that, not only may the whole school be advantaged in many ways by their efforts to maintain discipline and impart elementary know-

ledge, but that you yourself may have more fitness for the higher duties of your office, and may be better able leisurely and minutely to exercise due watchfulness over the studies and religious training of your charge. Perhaps, you have already tried many plans with your pupil-teachers, in order to come at some satisfactory result; and these you may have altered again and again, when you found they did not answer your hopes, but, on the contrary, matters were going backward instead of forward. Somehow or other, the children did not seem to heed, or learn from, their new guides; the appointed work was done, certainly, and yet it was not done—*i. e.* not efficiently; and, on the other hand, the pupil-teacher evidently had his own small ambition to be a Triton among the minnows, to mimic the master's position, so that he despised or neglected the little low details of his duties, whilst he was too superficial and inflated for the upper ones; the little folks, meanwhile, copying his flippant trifling, and the classes degrading. But then, upon what principle have you been making these experiments? Has it been with an eye to the *due employment* of the pupil-teacher, and with a resolve to draw out his *usefulness*? Or have you looked upon him as a mere ornamental appendage to your establishment necessary for these times, — a sort of scholastic milliner's doll, — “evincing to a discerning public” as well your own efficiency as the goodness of your school? Have you been stooping to please his own humours and fancies, or those of his parents, as to

what he could do, or should like to do, rather than studying the necessities of your flock? Have you been making him your drudge, wearing him out with monotonous duties until he actually dozed over them, like an ass in a water-wheel; or else, in a spirit of indifference, letting him do anything and everything he chose, whether fit or unfit, provided your own time and labour were saved? In short, have you forgotten that one chief reason of his being entrusted to your care is, that you might judiciously and duly employ him, so as to develop his budding talents, whatever they were, and to study the best means of making him useful in the real improvement of your school? For until you do bring your own mind, and theirs likewise, to aim sincerely at usefulness in all they attempt, it is not very likely to be much experienced: and whenever they cease to be truly useful for the great purposes of education, they become hobbledehoy nuisances that are only in the way.

See, therefore, that the pupil-teachers are really and truly at work—not in show or pretence, or like the dead though noisy clapper of a bell,—but intelligently and heartily at work. Keep your eye, unobserved if you can, watchfully upon them. Wherever you post them, and in whatever you employ them,—for the system under which you are acting, as well as your own wants and experience, will best guide you in such details,—these young people are your lieutenants and representatives: if they serve their chief well, all will go well; but if contrariwise,

all will fail. Try and interest them in every portion of your common work; and get them to feel themselves fellow-labourers with you — young and inexperienced truly, but still fellow-labourers—in a noble and good cause. Do not fly over their heads with sublimated directions upon general matters, such as you well know are hollow, vapid, and worthless, though they may save you the trouble of investigating your daily-recurring wants, and have the semblance of your teaching them their work; but be particular, clear, and short in your orders, giving them definite duties to accomplish, which you know they comprehend, and are equal to. When a class is observed to be behind in any one branch of learning, bid them get it up to such and such a mark, according to your standard: when a new book or new subject is to be introduced, show them how to break ground with it, and make them work it up to such and such a point. Then listen, at a distance, how the special task you have assigned them, is being performed; examine results; tell them where they erred in manner, method, or matter, and how they might improve. Speak your mind freely and frankly as to their progress in their new calling, the usefulness of their efforts, and the hindrances to its being more fully felt by the children and yourself. Employ them, either orally or in writing, to report the state of some class, the exact condition of which you know, to point out its faults and wants, and to suggest a course of action by way of amendment; discuss it with them; show them your own views,

and then assign them some fixed plan to carry out in order to its improvement. In short, see not only that they are always really at work, but interested in that work, and benefiting the school by it; if one device or employment will not effect this, another will or must. Do not be ever measuring their powers by your own wants and weariness, or confining their tastes and energies with the chain of your wishes and caprices. Rather win them in their own line to intellectual labour and energetic employment; cultivate in them an earnest desire of being apt to teach; and allow them, where you safely can, to see the beneficial result of pains-taking efforts. And thus, acting with an eye steadily kept upon the development of their practical *usefulness*, many of your difficulties in regard to pupil-teachers will vanish—i. e. except they be unpalatable louts or worthless fellows, and even then they must be mitigated. But, on the other hand, if you do not steadily watch and provide for their usefulness — if you do not first teach them to teach others — if you do not win them to what otherwise will be felt a dull and monotonous duty — if you do not interest and prepare them, entice and encourage them, is it at all likely the scheme can prosper in your hands, or that the lads will ever, by their own efforts, become the valuable assistants they might? If they have no end in view but to get money, no goal to aim at but the completion of their term, nobody to care for but yourself and the inspector, what else must be looked for than their turning out mere selfish, mechanical hire-

lings, who, if they can only avoid a row with you and blind your eyes, will do all in their power to defraud the children and the Government of their real labour?

2. Their **ACQUIREMENTS** is another subject that demands impartial and watchful attention, if you would avoid many difficulties in connection with them, and steer clear of some of the rocks upon which their hopes, and those of not a few masters, have unhappily split. For in the advancement of their own knowledge, and the steady improvement of their own general education, pupil-teachers have really many disadvantages; these demand from you not only patient allowance, but to be manfully encountered, and got rid of where possible. They begin their career by being chosen as Number One out of fifty, or it may be two hundred, children; and how can they be expected not to be somewhat puffed up in their own conceit? They seem to themselves superfine, now such a feather has been put in their caps by those who know what's what; they are the envy of rivals, and the wonder of dunces; the little Two-shoes in the lower part of the school stare with amazement at their tufted companion; and the noodles out of doors inquire again and again into the blushing honours of their fellow-parishioner: the monitors, the master, the managers, the clergy, all pay them more or less respect; so that self-conceit will whisper, Who so clever as they? Again, they are to have lots of pay every year; they are to be made more learned, and to have better situations

than their own master; they are to be called The Queen's Scholars, and to have a ticket which will tell the world how great they are, as well as bring them money till they die. Should they change their mind about school-keeping, they are to be promoted as petty officers under Government, or as mighty clerks in some big public office; and even should these old promises be withdrawn (as they hear they have been), they are sure to be well provided for in the counting-houses of great merchants and manufacturers. Added to this, their parents help on the mischief by making them cock-a-whoop with indulgence and flattery; they are better dressed, and occasionally better fed, than the rest of the brood; a certain amount of deference is paid to them, their sayings and wishes, which the others are denied; and they are necessarily excused from much of the home-drudgery, because of the many hours spent in school and in their private lessons. Then comes the notice they frequently obtain from some managers or ministers: they are invited to the houses on errands, or for instruction; have their pockets stuffed with fruits and dainties, books and blue-ties; are told their fortune is made, if &c. &c. Beset with such a variety of temptations, who marvels that many pupil-teachers become heady and high-minded, that they learn to swagger and be idle, that their intelligence goes backward, and their true knowledge decreases? The only work they are too often called upon to do, can be done with the small stock in trade they possessed long ago; and it seems a most easy thing indeed to be a master, if that and

a little more are all that is wanted to keep school with, save being a bigger fellow, and having the right to whistle or bawl, to give orders and thrashings. Perhaps, likewise, the private lessons they receive are mostly behind their capacity, though occasionally in the midst of Olympian clouds; they are, therefore, soon knocked off, being mere old rote-work, without evolving principles or comprehending problems; and the youths almost fancy, either that the great varnished catalogue of their future attainments, which is suspended in the school-room, is chiefly a blind, or else that what it describes must, somehow or other, be already in their heads. Hence, their *acquirements* are almost at a stand-still, even when they do not degrade; no progress is made, excepting in the mimic accomplishments of parrots: so that, when the year comes which is the *Pons Asinorum* of their genus, — which tries them on the substantial ground of knowledge, capacity, perception, and reasoning, — they fail and are disgraced.

These accumulated disadvantages must be met with forbearing consideration and energetic teaching on the part of the master: for, allowing that they are serious hindrances in his way, it may still be inquired whether most of them are not, in one shape or other, within his control; whether he has done anything with a resolve to mitigate this evil, and whether some of the disastrous consequences to the pupil-teacher may not be fairly laid at the master's door? And it is upon his upright watchfulness over

the increase, intelligence, and solidity of his youthful assistants' *acquirements*, that the answer to these questions will, practically, be found to hinge. Has he been honest in giving the full and specified time to their private instruction, at those seasons and in those places wherein it could be usefully employed by the lads,—not half an hour now and then, or here and there, in the midst of noise and discomfort, so as to dovetail with his own personal pleasure and pursuits,—but punctually, seasonably, and with some consideration for the comfort of his weary pupils? Has he been faithfully striving to communicate real knowledge, such as he might plainly see was needed; pains-taking, patient, sedulous, and earnestly laborious to lay a good foundation, as well as to instil the principles of things? Or, has he been merely superficial, dealing only in the straws that float on the surface of his manuals—a kind of intellectual teetotum, spinning the same dull letters over and over again? Has he been trying to teach what he did not know himself, and so making confusion worse confounded? Has he been a twaddling trifler about amusing but useless matters—a special and luminous gossip of parochials and politics; or only a mechanist in the lowest wheels of school-keeping, and thus wasted his valuable opportunities, till the miserable plight of the minds of his pupil-teachers showed him it was all too late to retrieve his folly? If such should unhappily be the conscientious admission of the master, then who can wonder at the dull, lifeless eye one too often sees in these young assistants; or,

it may be, the low, restless leer with which every strange object and visitor are watched with the most vulgar curiosity; and this, in whatever important matter the one or the other may be at the time employed? Who can wonder at the palpable ignorance and the cool indifference with which intellectual questions are constantly answered, perhaps with a grin, when strangers happen to be told to gauge their *acquirements*, after a tolerably long probation? Probably, only just escaping from the inspector's earlier examinations without failure,—hardly satisfying his most considerate standard, and receiving a smart rebuff, or threatening, from the council-office in London, — they are still wrapt up in a delusive notion of their capacities and attainments: they have nothing like a right estimate of true learning and its difficulties, no thirst for knowledge, no ambition for intellectual distinction, no earnest curiosity to discover truth in any of its forms; and so, the consequence is, they neither acquire, nor wish to acquire, anything of that solid and serious character which is likely to remain on their minds five years afterwards, or to reward the anxious labours of those good men whose hopes they are cruelly disappointing.

Where, however, the master's eye is honestly fixed on the steady development and increase of his pupil-teachers' *acquirements*, and where he rightly uses that improvement for the benefit of the whole flock, there, surely, dangers and vexatious issues such as these can rarely, if ever, be experienced. If, from the very first, the young aspirants be thoroughly

humbled, without unduly breaking their spirit; if they be convinced of their own ignorance and manifold wants; if they be made to feel that they have nothing in the least to be vain of, not even of what has been given them; and that it must be their own industry and labour, their own study and self-discipline, as well as their own actual acquirements in learning and virtue, which will decide both their usefulness and success in life; and if, concurrently with this levelling process, kind and suitable help be afforded them in every line where they are known to be deficient; then a goodly promise of modesty, intelligence, and studious labour will soon be seen. They will not be slow to recognise the truth of their own nothingness, or the kindness and talent of the teacher who patiently condescends to their intellectual neediness. Wherever they are always led to feel the object of their study to be over their head, demanding thoughtful, serious attention, and not under their feet, like an old nursery-tale, to be trifled with and despised; there they will be disposed to regard the task as something that will repay the labour of performing it, and they will reach out what strength they have to handle the prize. If they invariably perceive that the master knows the subject he professes to teach them, and is both earnest and willing to communicate all he knows, from a conviction of its importance to them, he will never lecture in vain. If they find him punctual, exact, accurate, watchful over their interests, patient with their dulness, and always pushing them onwards in

their career, they cannot fail, in some degree, to appreciate his care of them, and to make progressive advances in diligence and learning. Let the sweets of knowledge entice them onwards, their intellectual curiosity be awakened, and a laudable ambition for distinction be maintained; let them see something of their teacher's great superiority, and yet his wish that they may surpass him; let them be provoked to shoot ahead of the inspector's annual demand upon their attainments, where such a course is advisable, and outstrip their prescribed work by a year in an accurate and intelligent manner; and then, all the difficulties which may have formerly arisen in regard to their unsatisfactory acquirements, or the use they make of them in school, will come to an end.

3. Their CONDUCT and CHARACTER form a third most important source of careful watchfulness with all who in any way realise the difficulties of their position as the responsible instructors of this new class of assistants; difficulties which, as the world grows older in iniquity, seem, unhappily, to be on the increase. The pupil-teacher may, peradventure, be most actively useful in the school-room; he may be daily increasing in knowledge, and in fitness for his office; he may show himself attentive and respectful to the master, as well as diligent in his studies, and anxious for distinction in his year; he may perform his general duties in a way that the committee can find no fault with; he may have been often successfully examined by the inspector, approved by the required authorities, and been paid

his stipend; and yet be out-and-out, in heart and in reality, a bad fellow, whom nobody that knows him as he inwardly and truly is, would ever trust. Look at that small knot of youths just disgorged from the master's dwelling, some, with books, one with a portfolio or box of instruments, another with a surveying rod, &c. — all of them with written papers of some sort, clearly showing that they have been kept to their various studies by one who paid attention to the progress of their learning: indeed, if you look into their faces, and mark the weary eyelid, and somewhat sunken cheek, and thoughtful brow, you will conclude they have not only been busy over their several tasks, but interested in them. Yet, now they are fairly loose from occupation and control, and have no eyes on them to watch or report, observe their degraded manners — their swaggering gait, and self-satisfied air — their familiarly easy cut — their affected, yet low-life dress — their hair long and straggling, or curled with neglectful care — their cap a-twist, so as to give them the look of a sporting man — their winking eye, and the smart joke, often beyond the verge of the commonest respect or decency, at some passer-by, especially if a woman — their apparent gravity and steadiness, one finger on the cap, when they occasionally meet certain parties, followed eventually by some clever mimicry of authority or rank: — observe these things, with many other attendant tell-tales of character, and you might almost fancy you saw the very spirit of darkness infecting them with evil. Follow them to their sepa-

rate homes; and there, though you are told of their bookish ways, and perhaps see an evident pride in the learning of the children, you may hear amidst many a parental sigh of their disobedient and often insolent bearing, their imposing and tyrannical ways. See them in a place of worship; and there, with a demure and frequently sanctimonious air, amidst all their apparent attention to religious duty, how often are they the well-known promoters of fun and incentives to disturbance! Endeavour to get at their character from some well-conditioned neighbour or friend, and his account tells of their being selfish and sensual, radical and infidel-disposed. Even the schoolmaster himself, if hard pressed for the truth, and unable to escape from a reply, is forced to admit that they seem to have gone backward in good things, as to their secret disposition and character, whilst they have attained to great intelligence and usefulness, so far as their outward conduct is concerned; and the clergyman does not disguise his fear that they have gone further and further from practical godliness, whilst many ordinary scholars of the same age have become piously disposed.

Where such a state of things exists, as it notoriously does,—though it is hoped in fewer places than report affirms,—it may be most profitable for the master to inquire of himself what attention he has bestowed upon the *moral conduct* of the pupil-teachers, and what he has done towards the formation of *religious character*; for, surely, excepting he secretly be of the same wretched spirit with his

pupils, or they be more than ordinarily vile, it can hardly be credited that his efforts to guide their feet into the way of peace should seem so utterly in vain. Have you, then, at all times, in their presence studied to be careful and serious, truthful and upright, manifestly sincere in your own religious profession, and earnest about theirs? Or have they, with half an eye, seen through the thin disguise with which your indifference to true piety and godliness was veiled? Have you unguardedly given way to seasons of weakness and irritation, of threatening and reproach, of subterfuge and equivocal tamperings with their rightful expectations from you, until they have come to the easy conclusion, that all your lectures about religion were only so many words of course, and that your own profession of it was a sham? If so, rest assured you have been most miserably mistaken in your course of instruction; and though you may have indeed stored and enlarged their minds, yet it has been at the cost of your neglecting to watch over their moral conduct and religious character. Whatever have been your accidental, or mere formal, disquisitions upon true principle, piety, and godliness, it is your general neglect of such subjects—it is your own personal insincere illustration of them—that has, it is to be feared, led to so painful a result. Your words and actions, your views and habits, have been watched with that acute gaze that distinguishes youth; your example has been all-powerful; and, probably, these youths are tolerably accurate reflections of your inner man,

though they may in many things outstrip their master. Is it indeed so? Have you forgotten even the heathen poet's warning,—“*Maxima debetur puero reverentia*,”—and are these poor boys images of a living model?

Doubtless, there are many most excellent men, who have invariably shown themselves to be masters of another stamp; whose religious minds are not only brought to act upon the pupil-teachers, but to kindle the sparks of true piety in the school itself. Divine truth is the frequent and pleasant theme of their meditation and instruction; the word of God is their daily and long-tried text-book with their charge; consistent piety at home and abroad, in school and in church, is the living example of their declared principles; zealous labour, upheld by intercession and prayer, is their element; and a flock that, in some degree, reflects the sweet image of heavenly truth and love, is their present—as haply it may be their future—crown. But it is very sure all are not so. If, then, there should be any readers of these observations who may have experienced certain of the difficulties it describes, and can account for them in any of the ways which it hints at, let all such at once, and for ever, abandon every similar hopeless system, which can only tend to make youth ingeniously mischievous, for one upon which they may humbly ask, and look for, the Great Teacher's blessing.

CHAP. VI.

DIFFICULTIES TOUCHING INSPECTORS.

HITHERTO, whenever Inspectors have been spoken of in this humble volume, Her Majesty's Inspectors, acting under the orders of the Committee of Council on Education, have been alluded to ; and so, in its remaining pages, whenever the term is used generally, it will continue to be applied. There are, however, many other inspectors, appointed by ecclesiastical, or corporate, or lay, or mixed bodies, interested in the great work of education, who may likewise visit your school ; or to whom alone the right is conceded, to the entire exclusion of those first named. No observations are here going to be hazarded concerning that supposed necessity, or jealous policy, which debars any such institution from being assisted in its work by the co-operation of a judicious, experienced, and laborious Government officer ; neither will any opinion be passed as to the wisdom of inviting and admitting all inspectors, nor whether such repeated formal and public inspections are beneficial, or the reverse. These are matters with which you may honestly satisfy yourself you have nothing to do, when your employers have decided the point ; and you will be extremely unwise, if, in that pragmatical,

conceited spirit which so painfully distinguishes a few of your fraternity, you interfere in the endless dispute; or if, in some wavering of tactics amongst the managers, you perform a Curtian leap into the yawning chasm which party spirit may hereupon have made in your ranks. Notwithstanding, in two particulars you may meddle for the common good, without much injury or annoyance of yourself or others. As it is pretty certain that both you and your flock, your arrangements and success, will be considerably below par, and fail of your capabilities, where no inspector visits your establishment, you should give every active member of your committee no rest, until some fitting person is duly appointed to this important office. Again, you may see enough of the temper, or ways, or purposes of certain inspectors, as well as of the effects of their examinations and harangues upon the children in general, to be fully persuaded in your own mind, that they are either unfit for the appointment, or are doing more harm than good. In such cases, where the mischief is repeated, or the evil inveterate, it may become your plain duty to represent the case fully and impartially at head-quarters, especially where you have reason to believe it is either discredited, unperceived, or uncared for; and so to leave your managers to bear the burden of the supposed evil, or else to make such alterations as may meet the exigencies of the case. But, anyhow, in this last interference, you will of course count the cost beforehand, as well as be sure of your evidence; for you may provoke such

a storm as will make havoc of your comfort, and drive you from your post.

As to the repetition of inspection several times in the year by persons duly authorised by those in authority to visit and report on your school, though you may find the operation in itself to be a troublesome interruption, yet it need not become so, if you will lend a helping hand to the worthy officer wherever and whenever he requires it, and endeavour to get out of him as much assistance, counsel, and instruction as you can. It is surely an ill-wind that blows nobody good; and if you cannot get good, and promote good too, by such an arrangement, whereby a gentleman and a scholar is called upon to look into the condition of your school and advise with you upon its improvement, either you are much to be pitied, or he is unworthy his name. The inspecting-day will, of course, be previously announced to you and your scholars; it will be properly expected, and prepared for; it will be made a holiday, however short the time required; it will be seriously used as a trial of individual knowledge and skill; it will be an entire change of employment, that will rouse and amuse your scholars; it will be one more tell-tale to them, yourself, and the committee about the value of time, and the advanced improvement it has brought; it will be a season of good-humoured, frolicsome rivalry to the young folks, and of thoughtful leisure to yourself; so that, in all these respects, it would seem advantageous to have them frequently repeated. Added to which, if you your-

self determine to profit by the occasion ; if you are watchful, confiding, and quiet ; then you cannot help gaining, upon all such days, much insight into the disposition and moral character of the boys. You will observe many an exemplification of your own defects, and those of your system ; you will learn not a little about human nature generally ; and you will pick up a few stray facts and bits of knowledge, as well as certain hints about manner, method, and topics, which, eventually, you will find valuable acquisitions.

But however numerous may be the advantages derivable from the visits of the inspector, or, if you will, from a series of inspectors, there is no doubt that they are a fertile source of difficulties with most of the teachers in our elementary schools ; that they are dreaded by numbers of them, and hated by more. This is only natural, and what might be looked for, on the part of those careless, inefficient, or wicked persons who, being wholly unfit for the post they occupy, well know that, when the veil is lifted from their doings and misdoings by a skilful hand, their true character and that of their school will surely appear. But where teachers are really sincere and laborious, earnestly desiring to discharge the duties they have undertaken, as well as to improve themselves and the schools, however deficient both may be ; there the inspector should be regarded in the light of an experienced friend, who is able and willing to direct them in the right way. And as to most of the difficulties such persons feel in regard to

inspectorial visits, views, and examinations, they are very often fanciful, or relate to matters out of the master's province; or else, they are the necessary consequences of superior tact and knowledge being brought to bear upon the matter—the necessary consequences of that discipline which, whilst it raises the character both of the school and its teacher, is often felt by the latter as a humiliating, vexatious, and confusing pressure. The best way to get rid of such difficulties is to analyse them by means of common sense, truth, and conscience; and when the mind has recovered its balance, when the irritation (not to say opposition or hostility) occasioned by the visit has passed away, then to take advantage of every lesson that has been given, to improve in knowledge, skill, and usefulness. It would be an unenviable task, even if possible, to run up an account of all the difficulties touching inspectors, which are either pretended or professed, for they seem to be as various and contradictory as the dispositions and notions of the complainants themselves; yet, that they may not be passed by as if they were nought, or as if the parties who really feel such burdens deserved no sympathy or forbearance, a few of them may be gathered together under general heads, so as to admit of that criticism which may lead the teacher himself to give them a patient and candid consideration.

1. DISCORDANT OPINIONS AND DIRECTIONS.

These are of many varying kinds, according to the different parties with whom they originate, or by whose

standard they are measured. Perhaps those which arise between the inspector and the master may be here set in the front rank; not only for the convenience of consideration, inasmuch as all sorts eventually assume this relative bearing, but because they are often the most irritating and the most conflicting. Yet, generally speaking, and in the earlier visits, what special coincidence of opinion can be expected between the inspector and a teacher who has not enjoyed the advantages of a training-school, upon almost any of the leading points which come into discussion? On the one side, you have a gentleman who has had the benefit of a most liberal education; who, by study and acuteness of mind, is well-adapted to his office; who possesses considerable insight into all the schemes and no-schemes for improving the intellectual and moral condition of the children of the poor, having not only deeply looked into the matter, but himself witnessed their failure or success; who is familiar with all kinds of school-apparatus and books, as well as with the methods and plans of using and abusing them; who, by long experience, has learned the easiest and most promising ways to accomplish the end in view, and to avoid the blunders, errors, and mishaps which mar so many good intentions; and who is gifted with an almost intuitive power of gauging a teacher's capabilities and *realities*, as well as the *actual* condition of a school, and the causes which have led to its efficiency or the reverse. On the other side, you have a person from the humble walks of life, whose

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sorry education is constantly testified by his bad grammar, and by the manners peculiar to his grade in life; who, having been for years a shoemaker, painter, or in some inferior calling, qualified himself, in his years of discretion, for the post of school-master, by learning a little more arithmetic, and to write a better hand; who, having been ground up by some kind-hearted person for his new office, and let loose for a few days in some large and celebrated elementary school, has been at once appointed to his important post without either experience or real fitness; who has been inducted into some haphazard system of instruction, adopted long ago by his committee, more in their simplicity than from choice or approval, and to which, with certain pet addenda, corrigenda, and desideranda of his own, he is as explosively united as are the ingredients of gunpowder; who has, probably, never seen the working of any half-dozen schools in the world, and is peacefully ignorant of the dangers and difficulties of the advances and hindrances of scholastic matters at large; who is contented with his minimum of intellectual attainments, indifferent to his faults and wants, or unaware of them, though stark and staring to the eye and ear of every stranger; and lastly, who has a fancy that nothing more can be done for poor children than he does, or, if it can, that it is useless to do it. Now, allowing that, in some instances, the opposition of character between the two parties is less than is here drawn (though, in the majority of cases, it is well understood to be pain-

fully greater), what likelihood is there that two such different judges will either see with the same eyes, or come to the same conclusion? The inspector cannot but differ in opinion from the master, and that, it may be, upon almost every great point of teaching and discipline; and, if authorised so to do, he may give him advice and directions, not only the very opposite of the master's favourite notions and habits, but in fact subversive of his plans and supposed reputation, as well as fraught with a large increase of labour and responsibility. Supposing, then, that the master doubts, dislikes, and, as far as he can, retards these changes, is he acting wisely and justly, either towards others or himself? Is it possible he could ever have expected any other result than that collision of opinion, and those needful directions, which now offend him, from the first moment he heard of a gentleman of learning and experience having been invited to look into the condition of the school, and the capabilities of the master? What is there, in the views or recommendations of the inspector, either to disgust or provoke him? Where are the hardships and difficulties, excepting such as belong to bad temper, or a most lamentable want of knowledge, or blindness to responsibility? And what hindrances are now in the way of his own personal improvement and that of his charge, save pride, or indifference, or that morbid feeling of independence which is the destruction alike of true principle, usefulness, and happiness? Surely the wise course for every upright man to

pursue, under such circumstances, is thankfully and cheerfully to listen to such opinions and recommendations, however opposite to his past usages and present notions; it is, confidently to trust a wiser and more practised mind than his own, and to believe that his critical superior has no motive but the improvement both of master and scholars; it is, to set manfully about the work of reformation, self-instruction, and enlargement, which has been recommended, with the determination that such good and practical advice shall not be thrown away from any lack of zeal and labour on his part; and to be very sure that future years will convince him of the truth and wisdom of many things, where now he cannot but secretly feel he is purblind.

Again, these discordant opinions and directions may also arise between the managers and the inspector; and in that way, by a reflex action on the teacher, lead to certain difficulties in regard to the due discharge of his duties. But, as the inspector is not at all likely to give any directions where he is not first requested so to do, there seem to be only two cases worth notice, wherein the difference of opinion between him and the managers can possibly affect the master; for, however wide and important they may be, the latter is their servant and must be guided by their opinions alone, until they and the inspector agree, when the master will, as a matter of course, be instructed by them to pursue a fresh plan in this particular or that. The first supposable case is, where the committee itself is divided in

opinion, some agreeing with the inspector, and others opposing his views. This schism will soon reach the master's ears, even if the grounds of it have not been discussed in his presence; and it is just possible that each party may broadly hint to him the necessity for following their own separate and opposite conclusions. Yet surely, however troublesome it may be to have his patrons thinking and directing in contradictory directions, and however strongly he may himself feel with one of the two factions; yet his clear duty is, to work on steadily in the old way, until, by some general decision of the whole committee, he is either left to do as he pleases in the matters at issue, or ordered to adopt their own new schemes. The other case is, when, though the whole committee may be agreed in opposing the recommendations of the inspector, the master heartily and zealously concurs in them, from seeing the failures and deficiencies in himself and his flock which they are meant to meet, and from a hopeful belief that by them such evils will be remedied. The inspector's views may have all been made known to him by certain members of the committee, who may, perchance, have repudiated them, and put him on his guard against being leavened by any such modern inventions; whilst his own honest convictions may be just the reverse of theirs, and his experience of results, as well as his own self-knowledge, may be diametrically opposed to their prejudice. In such a state of affairs, the temptation may be great to test some portion of the new recommendations, and, by

evidencing their efficiency in the cure of plain failures or admitted evils, to try and win over the managers to the inspector's views. Yet here, surely, the path of duty is plainly this: to continue every arrangement in the old channel, with an honourable uprightness towards his employers; never to make one experiment contrary to their known wishes and orders, however promising the issue may be (and no inspector would for a moment sanction or encourage such a proceeding); but yet, at the same time, to keep the matter constantly before the eyes of individual managers when visiting the school, by meekly discussing them, and pointing out examples.

There is, however, another source whence these discordant opinions and directions arise; causing real perplexity to the teacher, and increasing his difficulties upon such matters, in a way which becomes occasionally very trying to his patience or skill. This is, when opposite, or at least widely different, views upon any subject are taken by two inspectors, who may be both equally authorised by the managers to examine the school, and in certain cases to give suitable directions to their master: either, when the Government officer differs from the diocesan, corporate, or local inspector; or else, upon a change of district, when a Government inspector differs from his predecessor. But, upon the most cursory glance at this matter, it is very plain that, excepting in those places where, unhappily, party spirit runs high, or in those cases where due information and assistance have been withheld from one or both par-

ties, or where one of the inspectors is a person unfit for the duty, such differences can seldom arise. The rapidly increasing knowledge of all the varied points connected with elementary education, and the enlarged experience upon the subject which every year's duties must contribute to the observant inspector, will of course develop new plans in this particular or in that, which it is expedient to adopt, and which may accidentally be first suggested by one or the other of the inspectorial visitors. Or again, one of these gentlemen may evidently have had considerable opportunities, which the other has not had, of witnessing the very evils he meets with in your school mitigated, if not cured, where those plans he now recommends have been fairly and cordially tried. So that, under both these circumstances, though there may be much discordance in the opinions and directions given by each, yet there may be actually none in their own minds; and if they were both present upon the same occasion, it is more than probable they would heartily acquiesce in a common conclusion. Indeed, from the very nature and professions of their office, it seems impossible to be otherwise, excepting in those unhappy cases already alluded to; and though appearances may at first seem to justify a contrary conclusion, especially when viewed in all their enormity through the spectacles of a somewhat morbid and easy-going teacher, yet, with time and better insight into matters, the mountain of discrepant difficulty will dwindle to a molehill. It is true, there are smaller and unim-

portant details upon which difference of opinion will exist amongst inspectors; for what subject is there, of equal magnitude, whereon all thinking men agree as to every particular? Yet, may these differences all co-exist with a unity of purpose to produce the same general result; and they will rarely be found of that conflicting character which it is impossible for a prudent master to reconcile or control. If each inspector knows from you, or from the managers, some of whom are usually present at their visits, what have been the views or orders of his predecessor in any particular matter, it is not in the least likely that any sudden or contradictory change will be recommended, except it be one evidently and notoriously for the better, which admits of no discussion, and which, when mentioned to him, would be gladly recommended by every experienced visitor. In such cases, the decision of the committee as to what shall be done, will of course guide you in all that you try, whether that decision does, or does not, square with your own views. If they conclude to adopt the supposed improvement, surely both you and your scholars must be gainers, even though it may cause you a little present trouble and perplexity; and even if they ignore it, contrary to your own wishes and recommendations, you at least are not responsible for the opposition, and can still canvass the measure with them individually on any fitting opportunities. So that, anyhow, your difficulties in that matter would seem to be ended.

With respect to those discordant opinions and con-

flicting directions which arise either from the actual unfitness for his office of one of the inspectors, or from the unfair and most unwise withholding of due assistance on the part of the managers, or from the recklessness of party spirit, you will do well to be patient with all men, and under every change of circumstances. If, contrary to your request, and to what you believe to be the interests of the children, and the cause of usefulness or truth, your committee resolve to adopt the recommendations of the later inspector, he ought to be formally and respectfully told by you, that he is subverting the plans of his predecessor; and they, likewise, ought to be made acquainted with your own views and experience upon the matter, as well as with the inconveniences, difficulties, and dangers with which you anticipate the change will be attended. You will then seem to have done all in your power to stay the expected mischief: at all events, you will have left your personal remonstrance, as well as the issue of the new scheme, for their calm consideration; and you will show your prudence and love of peace, by henceforward striving to forget all such unhappy differences, by labouring more earnestly and energetically than ever, in teaching and training those who have been committed to your care, according to the best of your ability. It may be, however, that the managers wholly decline to offer any opinion upon the conflicting views of the inspectors, and leave you to follow those plans or directions you think most conducive to the good of your pupils: in which case, all

difficulty connected with such discussions will end by your either leaving matters to run on as they did, or, if you see the way clear, by your adopting such suggestions as you believe will prove advantageous. Where the choice is of that kind that you cannot bring your mind to come to a decided conclusion, it would appear to be the safer course for you to follow the recommendations of the Government officer, by reason of his far greater knowledge and experience, and his being less exposed to party spirit, or a prejudiced, narrow, and stunting view of the educational question at large. Under the guidance of any one of the good, and talented, and self-denying men who form the inspectorial staff of the Committee of Council, and whose annual reports make all eulogy of them unnecessary, you need not fear to go far wrong; that is, if intelligence, zeal, and integrity mark your own personal labours. All the difficulties arising from discordant opinions and directions will then rapidly fade from your view, as you perceive how little power they possess to thwart the labours of an honest, energetic, and pious master.

2. EXAMINATION OF THE SCHOOL.—Under this head might be gathered a host of troubles, complaints, and difficulties, which are too often the woful burden of many a ditty touching inspectors. When the good men make their appearance, they are greeted by garlands and smiling faces; when they take their leave, it is occasionally amid drooping flowers and dull faces. The line of examination has perhaps been pronounced unsatisfactory; the questions, un-

fair and unusual; the lofty expectations of the inspector, absurd; and his method of dealing with their school, disheartening to the children, injurious to the committee, and destructive of the master's well-earned reputation: though, notwithstanding such hard speeches, it is, evidently, the necessary duty of the examining officer to forsake the beaten rut the scholars have been tramping, and to pursue the plan which in his own mind he thinks best, in order to learn, and to exhibit to all parties, the genuine unvarnished state of things. The fact is, both managers and teachers are apt to expect sometimes too much, at others too little, from the inspector. Where it is fancied that his long-looked-for visit will be the signal for at once transmuting their school, now in ill-repute, into a good one; or that, by a touch of his magic wand, he can relieve their minds, and labours, and breeches-pockets of certain diminutive burdens; or, by some splendid device and influential nostrum, he will make up for the neglect of years, and for the miserable dregs of education which their narrow jealousy has been doling out to the children of the poor: there, expecting far too much, they are greatly disappointed to find nothing in the shape of panacea, save the old story about good systems and good instruments, liberality both in opinion and expenditure, watchfulness and perseverance, painstaking, and a zealous co-operation of all parties. In other cases, too little is looked for from the worthy official. It is, perhaps, supposed his astonished eye will find all things *couleur de rose*; and that, amidst

the charming varieties of the show which has been got up for the occasion, the errors, deficiencies, and failures will not be seen. They expect, most probably, to be complimented for their energy, discernment, and success—to have immense deference paid to their notions and dogmas—to find an exact concurrence of plans and convictions—and, on their requesting his opinion of matters in general, to hear their master lauded as an oracle, and the children represented as considerably above their neighbours in all the important points of education. Whereas, after he has been as forbearing, and courteous, and compliable as possible under the circumstances, the state of things which his examination discloses, as well as his own judgment upon them, declared no doubt with gentleness and moderation, though at the same time with decision and impartiality, puts to flight the day-dreams of self-applause which had been so fondly indulged. Hence, where such disappointed expectations are recent, or strongly felt, it is not to be wondered at that a certain class of dissentients should inquire, What is the good of such an officer, who merely finds fault with things as they are, and, when pressed for a cure of the evils he complains of, cannot supply it?

Now, an inspector is but a mortal man, and cannot perform miracles, but must work by the old plan of “line and rule,” which has guided many a wiser hand than his. He is, also, it is to be hoped, an honest man, and though he may be skilful enough to detect every mischief exhibited before him, will not

pretend to the knowledge of some specific, by which all evils may be at once and almost insensibly removed. His business is, not to flatter the managers and the master, or to find a blooming garden where is rather a thorny waste, but to do his duty alike to the Government and to all parties concerned, without respect of persons, and without deceiving their hopes and imaginations, whether on this side or that. He can have no interest in promoting any delusion, and no motive for giving any annoyance. His errand is, to do what good he can by his visit; to render all the assistance in his power to managers and teachers in the work of education; to promote the best interests of the children of the poor; and to further the cause of truth. His duty is, to try and find out the true character of the school; what good it is doing, what is the nature of its machinery, the efficiency of its teacher, the cause of its present condition, &c. &c. His eagle-eyed experience will not be long in detecting every delusion, pretence, and sham, whether purposed or unintentional, though for some time he may be only a silent spectator of what is going on; and, if a fair field be allowed him, he will not only banish the blots which are evident, but get all parties into hopeful working order, keep them up in that spirit, and push on their energies. Nothing but *realities* can satisfy him; and every attempt either to impede his operations, or to throw dust in his eyes, will only provoke his conviction that things are not what they seem. He may, perhaps, say but little to the master, until he is specially re-

quested, even where he finds much to commend ; but, in that case, your own common sense, the plain results of the examination, the inspector's manner, and your own conscience, if you have been a faithful labourer, will jointly tell you enough. But, on the other hand, should it be his painful and commissioned duty to condemn your plans, to find grievous faults with the school generally, and to speak plainly to you about its deficiencies and your own ; remember no shrinking from reproof, or vapouring of temper, will alter the truth, or lead to any result but your own loss. If you are a sincere and right-minded person, you will be truly glad to be put in a better way to do good and to get good ; if you are teachable and industrious, energetic and intelligent, it will not be long before your own eyes and ears convince you of the advantage of following wise counsel.

Nothing is more unwelcome, not to say disgusting, to every straightforward spirit, than to discover that people are purposely misleading him by some humbug or ensnaring exhibition. A similar shock must be felt by an inspector when, upon an official visit, after having been somewhat talked down into silence, and bowed into certain places of honour and repose allotted to him specially on the occasion of the spectacle, he observes (as he cannot fail to do) that your school is primed, loaded, and all ready to be shot off in his face, precisely at the day and hour specified. Notwithstanding his glum patience, and an evident uneasiness under the infliction, he is respectfully requested to witness the knowledge and

cleverness of the children: and so there the good man sits, as, "shoot, fire, bang," — volley after volley — class after class, — he is compelled to see the wondrous fire or smoke, and to hear the rattling noise which has been for weeks in preparation for his particular benefit. The contrivers of the performance no doubt think it as right as it is grand, and look for their critical visitor to be slightly astonished: but alas! instead of admiring, he pities all parties, though he cannot help feeling contempt for the delusive trick as well as for the silly master, who is usually its chief engineer. Nevertheless, he looks on, during his set time, with all the gravity and forbearance he can; learning meanwhile many a point in the character both of the school and its teacher, even through all the varnish which has been so carefully laid over the scene: but when, at length, he is let loose from his trammels, and permitted to proceed in earnest upon the only business that brought him hither, he soon proves, to all who care to be convinced, that what has been enacted is merely a sham and a show — that the poor children are really, at bottom, untaught, superficial, ignorant, ill-trained, and misdirected, and that the master himself, when fairly tried, turns out to be only a sorry fogleman, who has but little learning, tact, or experience. No wonder that, when opportunity is given him, he tells all parties, especially the master, a few unpalatable truths; or that, after having recommended such plans and changes as he thought would lead to improvement where it was so cryingly needed, he makes his

bow with a sigh, hoping to find a better state of things in all departments next year.

Now, if you and your school are to be at all benefited by a systematic inspection, why will you talk of the difficulties it brings with it, when too often they are invited and provoked by such doings as these, or else by a pragmatical, consequential interference with the inspector, when you ought to be quiet, and respectful, and attentive to what is being done by him? Why not be honest and above-board in all matters? Why not let him see everything connected with your institution, just as it may be seen every day? If he wants to be entertained with any scholastic rope-dancing and pyrotechnics, such as he often witnesses, it is at least only civil to let him command the season of performance; which, you might find upon inquiry, would be when he was far enough out of sight, smell, and hearing of the same. Meanwhile, as you value your character for uprightness and fitness for your duties, let there be no preparation but that of collecting all your scholars in cleanliness and good order, having all books and apparatus ready for use at a moment's notice, and punctually attending to every request the inspector may happen to make in the notice of his visit. And when he comes, do your best that none of his valuable time be lost by bad arrangements, or trumpery explanations, or impediments to his proceedings in any way. Put everything at his easy control: watch his orders, carry out his directions, and, as far as you can, in all things save him time and trouble.

In short, by all the means in your power get out of him as much practical wisdom, help, and experience as you can; let the whole day be to you a season of learning many a needful and valuable lesson in your calling; and let him have the gratification of seeing you docile in any advice he may give, as well as anxious to improve yourself and your school by the advantages you have enjoyed. Confer with him privately, if he will allow you, upon the wants, and defects, and failures of which you are conscious: and, without any servility or time-serving, learn from him, if possible, in what particulars, and how (so far as you yourself are concerned), the future usefulness of your school may be increased. But whatever may be the particular line of conduct you adopt on the occasion, if you act in this spirit you will not only find all the professed difficulties of inspectorial visits ended, but they will bring to you personally, on every recurrence, new and lasting advantages.

3. EXAMINATION OF THE PUPIL-TEACHERS. — This cannot fail of being a very anxious time with most masters; and hence the difficulties they feel in anticipation of it and in connection with it are, at least in their estimation, both genuine and harassing. In the generality of cases, they know themselves to be only just up to the mark of giving the necessary instruction: when too late, they are conscious that much time has been lost, that some subjects have been carelessly or superficially handled, and that the idleness or dulness of the pupil-teachers has been too leniently met. As the appointed day draws on,

perhaps the master's solicitude about the result only increases, whilst his ability to make good the deficiencies he fears seems to have given way to hurry and confusion; and this the more so, where either the pupils have lost their courage, or else are indifferent and giggle with vain confidence. It is, however, now too late a stage in the business to regain lost ground: the inspector *must have his work done*, whatever personal difficulties may attend it on your part or the boys'; and in these days of neglect and abuse concerning such matters, it is less likely than ever that undue allowance for ignorance and inefficiency will be made towards any one in any quarter. It is well, then, to repeat again, that whatever difficulties you may feel in anticipation, and in the result, the appointed work must be done; and your complaints about its burden, or about the painstaking manner in which it has been looked into, resolve themselves only into a general attack on the system, or upon the fairness of the Government officer, at the same time that they betray the calibre of your skill, and the tendencies of your spirit. But, what need for any such difficulties being felt at all? If the pupils are possessed of only ordinary abilities and diligence; if, from the very first, they have been told they will each have to stand upon his own efforts, and that their sloth or incompetency cannot fail of detection, and must end in their failure: — if, on the other hand, you have honestly and earnestly done your duty in guiding them through the prescribed course of study, never losing one day or

neglecting one subject, but always aiming to make them as intelligent and proficient as possible:—surely, in such a case, there is everything to hope, and abundant reasons for your looking forward to their examination with a cheerful welcome. No more will be expected from them than is reasonable, and in accordance with the requirements of the broad-sheet, with the contents of which they are no doubt annually familiar: and, though you may be surprised at the sifting and varied character of the examination, as well as here and there be unprepared for the line it has taken, yet herein, as well as from every particular deficiency of your pupils, you may learn some weak point in yourself or in them, which may be amended to your common advantage during the coming year. You will discover where your own instructions have been defective or faulty, useless or wrong, superficial or on a bad system, misunderstood or misapplied: and likewise, with what temper and ambition, what coolness and self-possession, what modesty and earnestness, your pupils go through their work. You will most likely be permitted to see some of their papers, from which, as well as from the hints you will derive from the examination generally, many future difficulties of this kind will be somewhat lightened. Acquaint the inspector with any such that seem to await you, or your pupils, during the ensuing year, and obtain from him the advice and directions you require, to guide your inexperience, or to provoke their improvement in diligence and reflection.

But it may happen that matters are of a very different complexion: the master may have tried to do his best, and yet have found himself incompetent to the task, however sharp and attentive the pupils may have been; or else, he may have had to do with louts and idlers, to whose humours he has weakly or designedly given way; or, perhaps, both parties have been trifling, negligent, and self-satisfied. Under any of these circumstances, the master may have abundant cause to fear the result of an impartial examination; and, as the day approaches, no wonder that he magnifies his difficulties, by way of escaping, from the trap of his own devising, with as much tail as possible. Yet, instead of this, surely there is rather cause for self-reproach and shame, where the mischief is traceable to him; he has much to answer for, in more ways than one, both towards his pupils and patrons; and if he be at all a person of hopeful character, he will probably learn such a lesson from his ill-conduct in the matter, as may either tend to a most thorough amendment, or his abandoning a post for which he is so manifestly unfit. Meanwhile, the difficulties he has so wantonly assisted in bringing upon himself, must be fully encountered; and though they will probably end in the utter failure of his pupils, to the great disappointment of the committee, they may still be encountered in that honesty and frankness of spirit, in that anxious desire to redeem the past, which may mitigate his own disgrace, and save the prospects of the unfortunate lads from impending ruin. See

that, on the part of the pupils, there is no preparation for pretence and sham, trickery or deceit, and warn them that such things will not only be sure to meet with easy detection, but may end in their summary discharge: let them say what they know, and appear what they are, lest they make matters worse than need be. For yourself, do not for one moment attempt to hide, or cover, or blindfold any of their deficiencies; do not interfere in any mess or trouble, till you are asked; do not tender any wishy-washy, make-believe explanations or excuses, lest, in your turn also, you be confounded and silenced. The truth will come out, even about you and your ways; and all you can now do in your unhappy situation is, to let matters take their natural course, patiently to bear the censure and vexation you have richly deserved, and to learn wisdom, if you are permitted to do so, against a brighter season of trial.

4. EXAMINATION OF THE MASTER.—This turning of the teacher himself into a scholar, throwing him into the inspector's balance and testing the weight of his own acquirements, is an annual operation not at all welcome to most of those who are submitted to it, though a few are glad of the opportunity for instruction and self-knowledge which it affords. To some it presents a series of imaginary difficulties, which, however wholesome they may be as incentives to study and self-discipline, are yet felt to be unnecessarily humiliating and vexatious; whence the question will often burst forth from irritated and nervous tempers, "If my pupil-teachers

can fully satisfy the inspector, what is the use of his bothering me every year with this stupid examination?" Possibly the CEdipus of the Committee of Council (if they happen to keep one) might solve this indignant enigma, with very little thought, and in a very few words: and though that advantage will not here be offered, yet it is doubted whether the pupil-teachers would pass, generally speaking, without some such lever acting on their master; and it is likewise doubted whether such a whining with the conditions of their important office, be not as unjust to others as it is injurious to their own spirit, and dangerous to their own success. At all events, whatever may be felt to be the difficulties of this annual "bore," they may be easily got rid of where a teacher's love of learning, and thirst for distinction, and desire to excel in the right discharge of his duties, lead him to avail himself of the great inducements, now held out by Government, for obtaining a certificate of merit. This course would at once cut the knot of all such difficulties; and if the alternative be not taken, it is no doubt because it is understood to demand still more labour and study. It gives one but a low idea of the attainments, ambition, or principles of such a host of teachers as are now working the elementary schools of this country, to observe how few of them, comparatively speaking, have been induced to offer themselves as candidates for this honourable distinction, and thus to improve themselves in fitness for that important calling to which they are supposed to have now

given up their best energies, and the main success of which must depend upon their efficiency and zeal. However these things may be, the non-certificated must bear the rub of the inspector's annual examination of their acquirements, and of their general habits of thought, upon such subjects as seem more or less connected with the due performance of their duties. This is the fixed rule; and, however much it may be disliked or scolded, common sense and prudence point to proper and timely preparation. Where, during the past year, the master has shown himself worthy of his name, where he has taken due pains in the prescribed instruction of his pupil-teachers, and exercised ordinary diligence of study as regards himself, there can be no real ground to fear the result of his own examination. Difficulties he will be sure to encounter, for his path lies up-hill; but, as he gradually surmounts them, and the brightening landscape of knowledge becomes more expanded to his view, his labours will not only bring him present enjoyment in the consciousness of increased learning, but a most cheering hope of enlarged usefulness. And at the review of his own examination, though it may fall far short of what his examiner and himself could wish, yet, most probably, he will discover that he actually knows more than he had anticipated; and may find that the gentle pressure of a superior mind has not only drawn from him unexpected stores, but provoked him to redouble his exertions, and the next year to number himself with the aspirants for a certificate of merit.]

It is painful to think that there should be cases the very opposite of this, after all the facilities, inducements, and assistance which are offered; where teachers come to the inspector's examination in a spirit of careless ignorance, or high-flown conceit, the issue of which can only lower them in his estimation, and that of their employers, as well as in their own self-respect, if they be persons of any serious reflection at all. The difficulties, humiliations, and reproofs complained of by such wilful beings, are only such as themselves have provoked or devised. The inspector cannot, on these occasions, make them other than they are. The truth then comes out about the condition and style of their knowledge and intelligence; indeed, it cannot but come out marvellously with all who are required to put upon black and white what they know, and think, and believe. "*Litera scripta manet*:" there, in those sheets, is an undeniable witness to the just verdict of disgraceful failure. "Write me down an ass" might be the descriptive monogram at the end of many an examination paper, which had been begun in all the indifference of empty ignorance, or in the vain confidence of self-delusion. But, whatever may have been the kind or degree of preparation the teacher has made for this unwelcome trial of his attainments and powers, his best way to meet its foreboded difficulties is, not to endeavour to appear more clever than he is. Be humble; recognise your real position in the fact of your being examined at the same time, and in the same place, with your

own pupils; for this, being your own voluntary choice, shows the estimate you make of your own intellectuals. Do not sham, or mystify, or equivocate, or fly high, or be very fine, whatever be the subject. Do not guess at anything wherein you are conscious of thorough ignorance, lest you be caught adding some grave absurdity to a stupid error. If you were asked the probable age of the man in the moon, you would think it no shame to say you did not know; and if questioned as to which flourished first, Julius Cæsar or John Bunyan, and you cannot tell, it is better for you to admit it. Never take anything for granted, about which you are grievously ill-informed; or imagine yourself to be somebody of importance, because your opinions and views are asked on this or that. Think well before you speak or write; try and collect your scattered knowledge as you go along; examine your statements and exercises as deliberately as you can. Do not shock your examiner by slovenly blots, or free-and-easy handwriting, or slipshod spelling: do not disgust him with evasions, or cut-and-dried morsels prepared for the occasion, and wholly beside the mark. Do not affect that saucy independence, or servile obsequiousness, so frequently the last resource of low and nervous minds. But under every circumstance, do your best, honestly, thoughtfully, meekly, and respectfully; and except you are really unworthy of your position, you will most likely wriggle through all the difficulties you dreaded, gain experience from your past lethargy, and learn from your

examiner a few lessons of prudential wisdom against the coming year. But, on the other hand, if you are found so utterly below par that the inspector is unwillingly compelled to pronounce all your work unsatisfactory, you will, if an upright man, either straightway wipe off the reproach so far as may lie in your power, or wisely make way for a more efficient master, who may relieve you from those duties for which you are manifestly so unfit, as well as from that deep responsibility to which it is to be feared you have wilfully closed your eyes.

CHAP. VII.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE MATTER OF SOCIETY.

RELAXATION of mind and social intercourse are, in some measure, necessary to all; more especially to those who lead a sedentary, or in any way a studious and scholastic life. A man cannot be always reading and writing, studying or making others study, cudgelling his own brains or the world's dulness. The bow must be occasionally, if not statedly, unbent—not by change of work, which is often mere change of drudgery—but by cheerful interchange of thought and ways, by alternations of variety for eye and ear. Man is a gregarious animal, notoriously so; he looks for the companionship and sympathy, the amusement and support, of his fellow-beings, and never seems really at ease, or in confident friendship with them, until they have sat at the same table, and eaten and drunk together. Any one who is too much separate from his fellows, whether by choice or necessity, loses far more than books or self-flagellation of any sort will give him. He may fancy he has transformed himself into a wiser, greater, and less worldly character, whilst, in fact, he has gradually become ungentle, peevish, discourteous, ignorant of himself and human nature generally, proud, selfish, implacable, and morose. A man may avoid

society, or be accidentally excluded from its enjoyment, until he at length finds himself alone, in the midst of what has proved to myriads the very worst of company — himself.

It may seem strange to most, and possibly incredible, that, however certain persons may choose a lonely and secluded life, any should have their lot so cast in this world as to be almost entirely excluded from the social companionship of their fellows; but there are not wanting abundant instances, in every grade of life, of persons whose home is a tent in the midst of strangers, and who are called upon painfully to experience what unwilling solitude is. It is, no doubt, a comparatively easy thing, in whatever new and untried scene they may have to sojourn, for the titled and the wealthy, the tufted and tinselled, the notorious or exalted in any science, art, or invention, to force themselves, by their very position or talents, into the society of their neighbours; to be welcomed and appreciated by them; to visit, and be visited in turn: but these "*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*" are infinitely more the exception than the rule; and assuredly, the humble teachers of our elementary schools are seldom, if ever, of the number. Whatever be his talents, or worth, or his place in the scale of his calling, the schoolmaster is far too frequently almost one alone, the solitary bee, or wasp, of the place. No doubt, there are numerous cases where he is hail-fellow well-met with nearly every neighbour; but this is often to the cost of his principles or character, his usefulness or con-

sistency. It is, usually, a rare thing to see the good man with a companion, or to hear of his having any friend with him, excepting now and then from some far-distant spot. You do not find he visits his neighbours, or is being visited by them; you may occasionally meet him on a constitutional walk, or in a poor labourer's house inquiring after his scholars, or in some parochial meeting where his presence or assistance is desired; but, too often, when he has quitted the scene of his daily toil, entered his little dwelling, and pocketed his latch-key, he is left completely alone, without any human being to break the social monotony of his existence, for weeks together. Even if married, and blest with children, though certainly in that case possessed of home-resources to put an end to actual solitude, yet his additional cares now form a large offset to his comforts, however amiably and peacefully he and his humble family may be all living together; and it may be, that he feels more than ever, more than the bachelor who has merely himself to care for, the lack of out-door companionship. His wife and children are, herein, partakers with him of the same difficulties in regard to social life. They cannot force themselves upon the courtesy of others, or associate with every one, any more than himself; and the consequence is, not only that they are more isolated than is good for their minds and habits, but that they feel the monotony, divided though it be, pressing upon their spirits. The married state cannot in itself make up for an absence of all social companionship. Even under the

most favourable circumstances, after some few years of toil, the man wants a manly mind, the woman a female friend, to lean upon. They need others to assist them in unbending the bow of wearisome duties, to amuse and to sympathise, to laugh and to mourn with them, to scan the little world of their horizon, to tell old stories, and build new castles in the air. Perhaps, there is not, in its way, a more touching spectacle to such as from their position are conversant with the fact, than day after day to behold some worthy and laborious teacher, wearied out in body and mind, possibly with the seeds of constitutional disease ripening within him, retiring with a quick step but dejected air to his solitary dwelling, without a smile, or welcome, or cheerful friend to greet him; appearing at his post the next day, to go through the same round of fatiguing labour; expected to be always equally ready for his work, up to everything, pleased with everybody, with a smile for all; whilst languor, weariness of spirit, and that dejection which is peculiarly fostered by solitude, are weighing him down to the ground. And yet, possibly, he may have been for some years in his situation; be personally well known to a dozen gentlemen, besides the ministers of the place; respected as an active, useful, and good master by the inhabitants generally, but without one intimate acquaintance or friend within miles of him. It is almost a marvellous event in his life to be kindly asked out to dinner, or coaxed home to tea by any of his decent and well-to-do neighbours; though, in

some bold effort to break the bonds of his loneliness, he may occasionally press some chatting familiar to share his simple hospitality. In the case of the married teacher, there are additional, and sometimes truly heart-rending sorrows, the solitary bitterness of which he and his mate alone know; and if they are not hinted here, it is because many a stricken and now widowed spirit can better draw the picture, over which some helpless lookers-on, who knew a few of its deep shadows, have been only able in secret to sigh and mourn at a distance.

There can be no question about this being a most sad and depressing state of things, in whatever condition of life it may meet the teacher; but, however common it may be (and that it is so, except in some few favourable circumstances, is well known to the sufferers themselves), there is surely no necessity for its long continuance, at all events in its worst forms. Yet, unhappily, there are not wanting the most painful examples of its proving a source of great temptation to the unguarded and unwatchful, who make no efforts to resist its provocations. The temper becomes injured by gloom or suspicion, by sourness or moroseness, by insolence or cringing hypocrisy; the poor man is goaded into politics or pot-house amusements; he is led to associate with unworthy companions, who by little and little corrupt his habits and principles: then, by degrees, all is neglected, and ruin of some sort completes the woful tale. How wise, then, are all parties to do everything in their power to check the rising evil;

and, if possible, even to prevent its rising by anticipatory measures! No doubt, the blame of such an un-Christian, not to say unnatural, state of things is to be divided amongst many parties, though, probably, in every case the greater portion of it is to be laid on the teacher himself; and if not, yet it is only with his own share in it that he can deal, with any hope of success, in endeavouring to meet or remove the evil. With this intention, it may be well to glance at a few of its usual causes, and to suggest a possible means of mitigation or cure.

1. PROVOCATIVES TO SUCH A STATE OF THINGS.

— Amongst these, the very calling and position of the master may be mentioned amongst the foremost. He cannot well associate, comfortably or consistently, with the parents of his scholars, who, generally speaking, are very low people, and whose habits, ways, and thoughts are often most repugnant to his: moreover, he would be in their way, and, probably, injure his influence with them and their children, even if they did not shock and disgust him. The smaller tradespeople, little farmers, and petty retired folk of all sorts, have a style and dignity to keep, at least in their own imagination, which would be sorely imperilled by the schoolmaster's critical eye. They are quite aware that the schoolmaster is abroad, though they have never benefited by his travels; they are conscious of the deepest ignorance, and are afraid of his knowledge; they have every reason to know that not only their grammar, and geography, and history must be uneasy at his

presence, but that everything like pretended and oracular wisdom upon common topics, would be summarily detected; and so, lest their mighty fame with their admiring coterie should crumble to dust, though he were ever so silent and discreet, all the notices of civility they can afford him are included in a nod, or a passing bow, or the exchange of a few wordy nothings about nothing. Then, there are the better sort of farmers and tradespeople of every kind, both thriving in their way; but they are sometimes subscribers to "the charity," or if not, their servants' children go there; and though Mrs. is not ashamed to keep an eye on the shop, or the dairy, she holds her head very high, and thinks "them there folks at the school not fitting company for respectable people." Next may be mentioned the little band of accountants, agents, bailiffs, land-measurers, surveyors, actuaries, writing-clerks, tax-collectors, revenue-officers, and all the other small "professional" men of the neighbourhood; but, alas! they seem to think the master an interloper, who has snapped off a prize that might have been easily managed by one of themselves; and, believing his arithmetical propensities better adapted than their own for certain employments, they jealously suspect him as a candidate for any stray job that may be going; and are satisfied he would, in their society, soon discover the fallacy of some of their scientific pretensions. Any advance, therefore, he may make towards their acquaintance is met with that cold and shy indifference which blandly sings its refusal,

"No, my love, no." Then follows the motley band of private schoolmasters: but these are irate, because our poor friend teaches far too much at his establishment; whence they look upon him as a sort of rival, are compelled to work up their own standard a notch or two higher, and are afraid to let out, by too close conversation and too much intimacy, how far behind in the scholastic race both their "academies" and themselves are, notwithstanding certain cabalistic letters which follow their names, as smoke follows a squib. And — not to swell the list of possibles and desirables — there are his own brethren of the elementary schools on every side: but these are so far off, generally speaking, that, except in an occasional and formal call on a leisure day, they are hardly known to one another; and may perhaps just see enough of what is unwelcome in person or tongue, to fancy their neighbour may be, like a bad nut, hard enough to get at, but still not worth the trouble of cracking. At holiday times, all parties usually leave home for a change, to go and see old friends or relatives, so that these opportunities for mutually knowing more of each other are lost.

Another class of provocatives to this loneliness arises from the indifference about it of the managers as a body: they are concerned with you, as they suppose, only as a teacher, not as a member of the social system. They seldom or never inquire how you spend your leisure; nor, indeed, do they care how you get through it, provided it is not viciously, or to the neglect of duty. They never even so much as think

about it. What you do with yourself between 5 P. M. and 9 A. M., bating your lectures to the pupil-teachers, never enters their minds, and seems to be no business of theirs. You are counted a diligent, safe, and good man; all are satisfied with your work and your conduct; and they neither know, nor want to know, anything more than relates to your official ways. Possibly, here and there, one may be found amongst them of different notions, who may bear in mind that you are a stranger in a strange place, and who is somewhat concerned in regard to your solitude, though he may hardly know how to go to work for your advantage. Perhaps, he often decoys you, on some plea of business, to his own house, gives you refreshment, shows you books and prints, inquires delicately about your amusements and leisure hours, your companions and long evenings, and gives you leave to walk in his grounds when you will. He cannot, indeed, ask you to be his guest; but he would gladly use his influence with others to be courteous and friendly towards you, did he not fear to incur the charge of meddling, to wound your feelings or spoil your plans, and perhaps by his very interference to prevent the accomplishment of his wishes for your social comfort.

But, notwithstanding these and other extrinsic provocatives to such a state of loneliness, it is self-evident that many of its causes originate with the teacher himself, or at least are encouraged and nursed by his want of tact or temper. It may be, that you forget the relative position you still hold in society,

notwithstanding the learning which of late you suppose yourself to have gained ; and that, hence, you are somewhat tempted to the vanity of pinnacling yourself above what persons of ordinary consideration in your own grade, are disposed to allow. You may be looking for that deference and respect to be paid to you, even from the persons above mentioned, which you are never in the least likely to receive from them ; or, you may be expecting such advances to be made towards you, by way of gaining your acquaintance, as few men make to one another without some special reason. Instead of watching for opportunities to form social ties, and cordially embracing them when they arise, perhaps you seem to be too much engrossed by cares to meet them, or, otherwise, to be idle and indifferent in the matter. From some overweening notions of your rights and dignities, or from some fancy that you have been neglected, you cherish a spirit of independence and pride ; you become select and very choice in your views of companionship ; you are easily disgusted at a trifle, though you yourself may be a greater offender against good taste in many similar things ; you use no means to invite, and win, and keep acquaintances, but perversely give way to a cat-like solitude ; you are somewhat faulty in that charity which bears and believes, hopes and endures, all things. Whence it happens, that as you retire from others, and one after another retires from you, you gradually sink under the weight of your own dignity, or of the alienating circumstantialia you have gathered round

you ; and the miserable loneliness of your position is fixed and hardened by the consciousness that, after all, you have become the victim of your own neglect and folly, of your own selfishness and pride.

2. HINTS TOWARDS A REMEDY. — It is well, from the very first, to anticipate some of the difficulties which beset your social position and comforts, and to lay your plans for their prevention as far as possible ; and, even if they have got ahead of you before you were aware of the mischief, or by reason of your own unwise and unneighbourly spirit, you cannot too soon begin to set about their cure. With regard to the committee, and indeed all other your superiors, of course you can do little with them towards procuring fitting companionship except in a negative way. You cannot force them, or indeed any one, to notice you with kindness and courtesy, to solicit your visits, or cultivate your acquaintance : but you can, at least, abstain from informing some, and broadly hinting to others, that you do not care about society ; that you have abundant resources of amusement at home, and within yourself ; or, that you had rather be always alone, than have such and such sorts of people for your companions. When your new neighbours, whether high or low, are thus made to understand your views and feelings, they are not very likely to run much risk in troubling you with attentions ; rather, they will be only too apt to take you at your word, and to leave you to your own peculiar devices. If, therefore, you would either prevent, or remedy, the evils attending your

social position, you will assuredly not rudely dash away any attempt to enliven your solitary dwelling, whoever may venture it, by wayward speeches and independent manners; but you will meet every advance in a spirit of welcome and candour, especially when you remember that, as a stranger, you have nothing to lose in the way of kindness and friendship.

Whatever, then, may be your peculiar aims and notions, or the character of your disposition, it is here taken for granted, that what you especially require to meet the foregoing evils is a *cheerful sociality*. Where this is to be had consistently, do not look out for too much in the way of accompaniment. If with it you can get cultivation, *tantò melius*: but if not, your time and energies are already so deeply employed in study and learning, that you may well afford to be satisfied with mere change of place, and scene, and topics; still taking care to avoid, as a matter of course, all that is pot-house, low, and really degrading. Make up your mind that you can get some good from every one, and that it shall be your aim to do good; and so, though your friend may possibly not raise you much in the scale, by trying to raise him you know not what good you may do, and what entertainment you may find in him as a companion. Never affect to play the gentleman, or make any pretence of greatness: your own real character, value, and social position will soon be settled in every good man's opinion, whether rich or poor; and you will only weaken all, by put-

ting on patronising airs, for which respectable people will only pity you, and the multitude despise and speak ill of you. Drop all notions about your being a specially *desirable* acquaintance for any one. The petty vanity of human nature leads most of the decently educated and decently dressed to foster this delusion, and to suppose themselves a great catch for their fellows; whereas, in your case at any rate, few people in the parish know, or care to know, anything about these fancied excellencies, and none would ever rate them as highly as you do. Peradventure, if any one of your patrons or neighbours could buy you at his price, and sell you again at your own, he might become a greater gainer than by any other speculation. — In all your social intercourse, never forget to lay aside the schoolmaster, else the old habit will stick to you like a bur. No one likes the regular scholastic bow-wow either in manner or method, opinion or tone; nobody wants to be bridled and pulled up, however nicely and gingerly you may wish them to amble. If people blunder here and there in your more refined estimation, it is only what you and all men are doing daily; and, if there be no sin or unkindness in shutting your ears to the grating jar, why, let them blunder on, especially as, in some cases, your own corrections, however sure you may feel of *their* worth, may be no improvement. Do not adopt or encourage any violently political or ecclesiastical feelings; you can still be invariably most decided in such things, where you have truly and sincerely

looked into them: but, whilst your own opinion upon these matters can always be candidly and temperately given, if you think the occasion and place and persons fitting, remember that other men may have come to conscientious conclusions opposite to your own — possibly, too, nearer the truth, — and should be good-humouredly allowed to rejoice in their own feelings and convictions as well as you. Let all your social discussions, therefore, be conducted with modesty, gentleness, and peace. Whilst, on the one hand, you shun all the currying trumperies of the universal bower and scraper, take care, on the other, that you never adopt that low, “don’t-care” independence which so increasingly marks the social manners of the upstart in these latter days. It is not so much by the large number of your acquaintances that you will benefit, as by their varied character and their usefulness towards the end you have in view. Let it not, therefore, be so much your aim to know everybody in some way or other, even amongst those whose acquaintance you might make, as to know a few persons well.

Again, cultivate friends by laying out all your available powers to win their confidence and esteem, to contribute to their enjoyments and happiness, and wherever you can to do them good. There is no such thing as a one-sided, selfish friendship; or, if it should be found to exist for a short time in any one, a gradual display of the blank on the other side will soon dispel the delusion. It would no doubt be an agreeable operation at certain seasons, could we

warm ourselves by ice and snow; but until that discovery is made, it will be found next to impossible to enjoy any true friendships without cultivating them at some personal cost. We are told by the wise king, "a man that hath friends must show himself friendly:" how much more then should he do so who wants friends ! They grow not thick on every bough; and at your years and experience it is harder to win and to keep them, than when you were younger. Let simplicity and sincerity, gentleness and amiability, good-sense and good-humour, integrity and piety, guide your words and actions. Where such qualities are seen generally in exercise, your neighbours will soon come to a happy conclusion with respect to the value of your character. Especially endeavour to break down all the foolish fences, and the idle excuses or hindrances, which keep you from a closer social intimacy with the proprietors of middle or commercial schools, and with the teachers of elementary schools like yourself. Let the former see that you are not a quizzical puppy or needy adventurer; that you are neither a spy on their ways, nor a robber of their flocks: but that you are humbly and conscientiously trying to improve the intellectual and religious condition of a class below theirs; and that all you desire from them is, their good opinion and friendly acquaintance, so far as they find you not undeserving of it. With respect to your own more immediate associates in the scholastic line, whatever be their distance from you (it cannot be, after all, so very great), go frequently

to call on them, and get them to your own house, that you may at least have some little chance of knowing and benefiting one another. Be more than a common, far-between stiff and formal caller, but go to work like a person who truly desires their acquaintance. Bring your half-holidays and any other times you can into use for this purpose. Never talk about difficulties and busy hours; where there's a will, there's a way: and if now you are too fine-feathered, or too sweetly voiced, to sing to others less gay and less vocal than yourself, beware lest by-and-by no one should be found disposed to sing to you. Lastly, make yourself useful wherever and whenever you can — useful on principle, useful in little things, to high and to low, without ostentation or grudging. The parochial authorities, the literary and scientific institutions of your neighbourhood, the religious, benevolent, and charitable societies, may, occasionally, all be glad of your help in many minor ways, wherein you may do good both to yourself and others; so far, that is, as your time and abilities may serve. Through these you may make a closer acquaintance with many clever and good men, who may help you in your studies, provoke you to make greater advances in scientific knowledge, assist you with scientific apparatus, show you interesting and novel experiments, and possibly encourage you to give a popular lecture now and then in the school-room, by way of expanding the minds of your poor neighbours. But, above all, you may learn from them many an excellent lesson of true goodness and

true charity, and true religion, which may not only strengthen and deepen your own principles, but largely assist you in training your young flock in the ways of true happiness, and present as well as eternal peace: you will enjoy not only the comforts of that social intercourse by which, as iron sharpens iron, a man sharpens the countenance of his friend; but you may lay the foundation for that more blessed acquaintance which shall edify and enliven you in this world, as it shall be perfected in that which is to come.

CHAP. VIII.

DIFFICULTIES IN PROSPECT OF THE FUTURE.

No thoughtful man can help meditating on the future, or, in his own peculiar way and measure, preparing for it; if not with anxiety and gloom, at least with some feelings of concern, albeit these may be indulged in a reasonable and Christian manner. The future is certain in some way; whatever it may be conveying on its wings, is coming nearer and nearer, and, as years are added to the past, it seems coming with still faster speed. It is often a picture painted by ourselves, at almost every new stage of life, from our day-dreams of wishes or fears; and yet, after all the guesses and imaginations bestowed upon our labour, after all our experience and adaptations to circumstances, very few points on the gay or dusky canvass are actually realised. But where mere imagination is discarded, and anything like true preparation for the future is carefully made, though in all things the issue may not be as we had hoped and expected, yet much good will be derived in some way or other; perhaps the best fruit of our thoughtfulness, the really most suitable to our individual cases, and that too, given, in the best way. At all events, happen what will, such considerate persons are all the less likely to be stunned and bewildered,

terrified or lost, when the strange conflict comes ; as is too often the melancholy and helpless lot of those who never prepare for the future in any way.

When a teacher has been for certain years zealously toiling through his round of duties at the school ; when the bloom of his existence is faded, and the golden morning of hope is become sobered down to the stern realities of life by the burden and heat of the day ; when romantic notions, and high-flown ambitions, and self-exaltation, and dreams of comfortable independence, have been all brought down to a somewhat truer standard by daily occurrences and repeated trials, — then, oftentimes the thought arises, “ How long will all this last ? Whither am I hurrying onwards ? What will the end be ? ” When the energies, and strength, and endurance of the weary body are somewhat injured and used up, like the torn wings of the honey-bee at the end of summer ; when the mind is distinctly felt to be not so springy and elastic and docile as once it was ; when the character is too set to yield much to any plastic hand, however friendly ; and the temper does not present that unruffled surface it formerly did, — the sense of decreasing powers, and diminished joys, with the fears of failing usefulness, will at one period or another haunt the inquiries or expectations concerning coming days with their chilling gloom. When self can now no longer be set on so high a pinnacle of satisfaction and vain glory, either moral or intellectual, as formerly it was ; when the dreamy expectations about money, fame, or easy indepen-

dence have come to an end; when the person has now for some time been entered a pupil in the school of affliction, and begun to learn that most humbling of all lessons, himself; when he has been led, in some measure, to discover his own ignorance and helplessness, his pride and obstinacy, his self-seeking and untruthfulness, his self-delusion and dissimulation; when, almost in every point of view, he feels that he should shrink and quail before the scrutinising eye of yonder polished, self-denying Christian gentleman, and therefore infinitely more so in the clear sight of that heart-searching God from whom no secrets are hid, — then, conscience, fear, mistrust, sense of desert, and many another troubler, will rise up to fling their gloomy shadows over the coming future of body and soul; and difficulties are darkly foreboded that continually depress, and at times well nigh drink up, the spirit. Such forebodings are, no doubt, unknown to many: all men are not made alike; health and success, situation and circumstances, habits and temperament, reflection and conscience, with such like causes, contribute, each in its way, to give to the future a very different hue. Nevertheless, that they are manifold and widely extended, is well known not only to the sufferers themselves, but to their friends, when listening to their anticipations of coming evil. There are others, also, who have been unexpectedly called to sympathise with the lonely teacher amidst such overwhelming presages of sorrow, and even to witness the painful issue of expected suffering. They have too often

seen the averted eye and quivering lip, too often watched the aching spirit, and sat beside the dying bed, to doubt about these things. On the contrary, they have perhaps there learned with grief, how possible it is for themselves, as well as for managers, to know nothing of what is really going on in the inner man of some patient master; to be shocked at their own want of perception and of sympathy under his temporal or spiritual burdens; and to find it all too late to cheer the depressed, and succour the faint-hearted, when life is ebbing to its close.

It would be well, then, if all parties would endeavour to live more than it is feared they do, as members of one body; for the head and the foot, the eye and the hand, to care more for one another's welfare, though this one may be feeble and that one honoured: but, instead of this, to feel, or to ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" displays a spirit very opposite to that of true charity. Surely, if that noble and excellent cause in which so many are linked together, albeit of very different grades, cannot lead them to bear one another's burdens, — especially if it do not thus constrain those who are fellow-teachers, — the wants and miscarriages, the sufferings and end, of our common humanity might persuade them to a more watchful sympathy. Yet herein, as in many other cases, the remedy must begin at home, by such an anticipation of the difficulties in regard to the future, such a looking at them in the face under their worst forms, as may lead to a manly and Christian preparation to meet

them; for this course, if consistently and wisely pursued, instead of depressing and unnerving the mind, as some fancy, will fortify it for many a trying encounter, and pluck the sting from the worst of sorrows. To meet individual cases would here be impossible; yet a few general matters may be collected in kinds which possibly will help the thoughtful or the troubled along their anxious way. In regard, then, to the future of

1. THE BODILY TABERNACLE ITSELF.—You may observe the gradual inroads which, here and there, years, and toil, and troubles have made upon it. You are constantly reminded that your strength and energies, your powers of labour or endurance, are not what they once were; you cannot depend upon the now failing mechanism of many a valuable organ, as formerly; and you are told by this member or that, perhaps by several, that pain is the heritage of fallen man, and dissolution the debt of sinful nature. Meanwhile, you have active duties to perform, for which you are accountable, and which must be performed with diligence, if your uprightness is to be maintained, or you yourself are to be allowed to retain your post; and, if these duties cannot now be got through without considerable personal cost, nor to your complete satisfaction, and if you feel or fear that in this respect matters will get worse and worse, it is only natural that you should anticipate a time when the work must be given up, however unwillingly and ruinously to your fortunes.

Now, do not meet trouble half way, or be mor-

bidly anxious about evils which you may perhaps never realise ; it is the very way to increase their burden, or, at any rate, to unfit you for bearing it. Why should you mourn with disquietude, over a little dilapidation of the poor earthly house ? True, you well know the uncertain tenure by which all men hold it ; but you also know that He who made it perfect, and has permitted it to become subject to disease and vanity, can as easily sustain and preserve it, and will do so until your individual work is done, and His own wise purposes in your existence are answered. Yours is no solitary case, as you are well aware, though its details are better known to you, and its consequences more important to you, than that of others. All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass that fades and withers when its appointed hour is come. What incipient ruin of the fleshy tabernacle you feel and see, perhaps all of your years who are moving round you in their several walks of life, painfully experience in their own persons ; the great and the wealthy, the busy and the idle, the wicked and the good, professional men and shop-keepers, farmers, mechanics, and labourers, all probably have the same sad tale to tell, and many of them a far worse than your own. Nevertheless, each is busily occupied in his accustomed round of toil, and probably will be so for many years to come ; none save intimate friends or companions knowing the peculiar thorn in the flesh by which they are tried. " A creaking door hangs long ;" and, for aught you can tell, your bodily in-

firmities may never become much worse as hindrances to duty, whatever they may become as afflictions to bear. The sun is declining half the time he is above the horizon, yet illuminates the earth till he sets; and how many severe bodily sufferers have we heard of, whose fruitful and earnest usefulness only increased with increasing years! Do not, therefore, be alarmed either by present decay, or forebodings of its increase: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Procure skilful medical advice, if necessary; avoid exposure to real dangers in the way of provoking your particular troubles; beware of personal neglect, as likewise of abuses of any kind, for thereby too many run headlong into temptation. And if thus you are doing all in your power to keep up the poor failing tabernacle, then, whatever may be the ill that seems advancing, meet it with fortitude; do not talk of it, but rather, try to forget it as far as you can. At all events, do not be anxious about it, or give way to fears which will only unfit you for duty; but let a spirit of cheerfulness, and of meek confidence in the watchful care of your Heavenly Father, be your companion to the end. As to very long life, why should you be so earnestly desirous of it? In its measure, and under the special control of its Author, it is no doubt a means of blessing; yet surely, not unfailingly or necessarily so. Remember the commendation given to Solomon, because he had not asked it; and though it be not added to your countless mercies, yet, if your strength be made equal to your day, you have no cause to

complain, but rather to rejoice with thankfulness. The fathers have gone before you, the prophets have not lived for ever, and you in your turn must, before you receive the reward, put off the mortal and corruptible; for there is no discharge in that war. Yet He who watches over the fall of a sparrow, has reminded his faithful people that He not only knows their frame, but remembers they are dust; and as He never calls them to labours they are unable to perform, so He will never put upon them more than they are able to bear.

2. THE FUTURE OF MIND.—But the decaying of the frail tabernacle may, perhaps, not be your only or your greatest trouble in anticipation of the future; indeed, you may be spared all bodily suffering worth mentioning, and in that respect continue healthily hale to the last. Yet, for all that, advancing years may be making you to feel the gradual decay of your mental powers and energies. You do not now find them what you had thoughtlessly fancied they would be, perennially strong, unaffected by years, or by the wear-and-tear of life. On the contrary, you experience, to your daily grief, that your mind is not what once you knew it, in sharpness, penetration, patience, or any other quality some measure of which it had attained. You feel unequal to the accomplishment of much you would aim at, if not in duty, at least in the increase of knowledge and learning. You find it jaded, numb, as it were palsied, and not disposed to answer to the whip or spur, as once it did. You now look more

for short and entertaining books, are more disposed to read politics, and to amuse yourself how and where you can, and to go out and commune with nature on you know not what. You meet with many unexpected difficulties in new plans, or a recurrence to old ones. You are accidentally asked questions by the managers or others concerning school-matters, or general topics, with which you were once quite familiar, and find yourself completely bewildered for an exact or satisfactory answer. You meet with and hear about other masters who are far beyond you; some, it may be, quite as old, if not older, though others may be younger and may have been in every way better taught. These are frequently spoken of as models, perhaps pointed out to you as examples; and yet, though you would willingly do so, you cannot bring your mind to new efforts, because you seem daily to realise its dull and unimpressible condition. You cannot help observing the new elements of all manner of strife by which society is now visited; the conflict of opinion seems fiercer; the coming days of evil are evidently getting nearer; confusion and division meet you on many sides: but as you witness the storm gathering round your own little horizon, as you see it in your school, and learn it from the counsels of your patrons, you feel as if you were incompetent to any fresh struggle, or the adaptation to your system of new resources.* Your

* Nothing can be more fallacious than the estimate most persons make of the resources of elementary education for the lower classes. It is quite true that great and most honourable

mind seems unequal to any additional burden; and, even as you anticipate the difficulties in the way of

efforts have been made in its cause by one portion of the community, though silently opposed by another; yet the experiment of what may be really effected in procuring a real education for the people at large, cannot be truly said to have ever been tried, when these efforts and the results to be accomplished are fairly compared. When it is remembered that not more than one out of every five of the children of the poor who ought to be in the elementary schools of our country (viz. such as are between the ages of three and thirteen) are actually found there; and further, what a miserably defective education is for the most part there offered; and, again, in how few years, not to say months, after the school is left, all impression of this superficial instruction is, notoriously, lost,—it will be evident that, as yet, those good men who are foremost in the cause of general education are in the infancy of their knowledge and experience, and that something far better would soon be devised, if they were not cramped and stunted in their efforts. Meanwhile, it may be doubted whether ignorance and vice are not increasing in a much larger ratio to the population, than learning and virtue. During the last forty years, our population, ten years old and upwards, has increased 65 per cent, whilst the convictions for crime have increased 625 per cent. If the juvenile offenders be distinguished from the rest, the progress of criminality among the mass of our labouring community will be yet more apparent. The number of criminals between the ages of ten and twenty, committed to prison in the year 1835, amounted to 1 in 449 of our population, and in 1844 to 1 in 304. Thus, looking to the past, we find *an increase of crime*, not only absolutely, but *relatively, to our population*; and for the future we have an increasing population of criminals growing up. So that, to use the words of the City Solicitor in his statement of a plan to check the evil, published a few years ago, “we find that, in spite of the diffusion of knowledge, the number of juvenile criminals increases in a larger proportion than the number of criminal adults.”

your continuing in the old track of resistance to opposition or obloquy, you become dejected and fearful.

Now, though some of this is reasonable, and ought to be looked into and mended without delay, much is unreasonable, and, again, much must be patiently borne. If you have allowed your mind to go more or less to ruin, because you have got learning enough for the purposes of your duty, or the filling of your pocket; if you have closed your eyes to what has been going on in the world, and idly allowed others to pass you by in the scholastic race, — then these forebodings of difficulty spring rather from a voluntary intellectual degradation, than from any decay of mental powers. Now that, through increased experience and self-knowledge, you have become more sensible of your wants and deficiencies, you feel less able to cope with them, simply because you have lost the tact and the clue, — lost, too, the industry and ambition, the interest and aim. This is no decay of mind; it is some small portion of that harvest which waits upon such sowing: and excepting you at once break up your fallow ground, and diligently prepare for a more fruitful season, your degradation and your difficulties will increase together. But on the other hand it may be, that by that secret and silent process which tracks the steps of rugged toil and increasing age, and is more easily experienced than it can be described or accounted for, your mind has lost much of its powers and energies in every way; its balance seems often on the incline; its acquisitions, and

patience, and temper, are not always within call. You feel at times as if you were in a mist; and then any contemplation of the future — any inquiry how you can possibly get on, if your mental dulness and decrepitude should thus continue to increase — fills you with disquietude, if not with anxiety, as to what course your duty to others, as well as your own self-interest, should lead you to pursue. But consider awhile. How much of all this is there, that is noticed by others, or that really affects the character and results of your work? Possibly you may not get through your usual routine of duty, with the same mental ease and comfort that once you did; you may not be as well able to call in your intellectual resources, as formerly; your mind may not as readily either receive or retain impressions, as when you set out on your career: but, surely, you never expected perennial youth, or to be exempted from the ordinary decline of intellectual vigour. If you are still able to do all that is required of you, though at greater cost — if nothing is neglected, or shuffled over — if your employers and the inspectors are satisfied — if they feel that what you have lost in adroitness and energy, you have more than gained in experience and true piety: — then, why need you mingle to-morrow's difficulties with to-day's? why will you indulge forebodings about the future of mind, which the mind itself may never be called to know? The decay of powers which you experience now, may, haply, never much increase, with due attention on your part to their constant support and repairs: and

the last day you may ever spend in your school, be your age what it will, may possibly see your mind but little less vigorous in the daily exercise of its faculties, than it is now. If, therefore, you are not conscious of self-neglect, leave to-morrow to provide for its own, whilst cheerfully and earnestly you go through the appointed tasks of the passing hour: there is One with whom, if you are trying to serve Him, you may safely leave all its issues, whatever their burden may be. As to what other masters, older than yourself, may feel, possibly their anticipations may be as gloomy as your own, though you know nothing of them, and though they appear to go through their work with the same mechanical facility as ever — *i. e.*, probably, as you also appear to every body, save to yourself. But what, if, owing to their having better natural talents, having been better taught and directed, having had less self-will and more diligence — what, if their minds are now, even at your years, sharper and more awake than your own? this is no mark of any decay in you, but rather it is the almost necessary consequence of the advantages they have enjoyed and used. Yet most likely they, too, are as conscious as yourself of diminished mental energies, although, from the fact of their standard being higher than yours, the decrease is less sensibly felt.

But, however this may be, such a spirit of depressing foreboding should never be encouraged, whether the decline of the intellectual faculties be

fancied, or real; on the contrary, strive to waken up your own spirit, by reviewing your own knowledge, by strengthening and correcting first elements where needful, by cultivating memory, by diving more and more into principles, and by endeavouring to push every department of your learning a little further. It may be not at all necessary or advisable for you to plunge far into new and difficult studies, perhaps to the injury of your health, the detriment of your school, and the increase of the very incapacity you complain of; but still, you may use suitable means to sharpen and strengthen your mind, such as you yourself feel comfortably up to, or others in whom you have well-grounded confidence may recommend. Act decidedly, regularly, patiently, courageously, in disciplining your own mind to the very last; and if, at the same time, you look to the health of your body, no doubt much of your groundless presentiment of coming evil will pass away: at all events, that which springs from weariness or ill-health, from solitude or want of encouragement, must under such treatment materially decrease. But as to the ordinary descent of life, and the consequent partial and gradual failing of the energies of the mind, quit yourself like a man in the anticipation, and trust that they will all serve your turn and last your day. Perplexities and humiliations you must still encounter, for these belong to failing humanity; but, if you cannot meet this little share of it, how are you fitted to teach others? if these things alarm you, what by-and-

by? "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"

3. THE FUTURE OF RESOURCES.—It most frequently happens that the teacher has nothing at all to depend upon for providing the means of life, but the stipend received from the managers; and often, excepting in a few favoured places, or where the generous views of kind-hearted inspectors have materially altered the case, this stipend is miserably below par. No by-ways of turning an honest penny are put before him; perquisites and windfalls of any kind, rarely make his acquaintance; and, having no private income, however small, to fall back upon, it is usually only by some careful management of his little resources, that the two ends of the year can be comfortably introduced to each other. There is a certain respectable appearance, both at home and abroad, which he cannot help making; for instance, he cannot run about the parish in paper-cap and fustian, like the mechanic or labourer: and there are certain expenses connected with his calling, which he cannot always shirk or decline. Hence, however economically and sparingly he and his family may live, the little allowance of every quarter is anxiously expected; and if, by any accident, it is delayed, some necessary or comfort must be cut off for the time. It is, therefore, not a matter of surprise that, when a teacher finds himself descending

the vale of life, he should begin to feel some anxiety about the future resources by which he and his family may be maintained: such a fear of poverty or want, coming upon them like an armed man, often adds gloom to the already worn countenance, and unnerves the energies which are already weakened by age. Perhaps your stipend has been low; or, it may be, your expenses have been comparatively heavy from circumstances—from past debts, or liabilities in commencing your new calling, from poor relatives, from wife and children, from sickness, and other like causes. Whatever you may have desired to do, you have really felt unable to lay by money in a club, or insurance society, or savings' bank, or in any superannuation fund; and have found it as much as you could manage to provide daily bread for your family. The *res angustæ domi* are as pressing now as last year, and you fear they will be still more so as advancing age steals upon you. Or, possibly, even if your annual allowance has been on a more liberal scale, the same train of difficulties has arisen notwithstanding. It may be, likewise, that you have been an inconsiderate man; and, not knowing the value of money, have frequently spent it in some free or foolish manner, instead of providing, as does the ant, for a coming winter. Anyhow, now that the earthy tabernacle begins to decline, and you cannot help anticipating more withering inroads on body and mind; or, it may be, through the removal of present patrons, or else offence taken, or younger men advancing,—you

fear a day will come when your necessities will be many, because your stewardship is at an end; and since you cannot turn to another employment, or think of casting yourself on public charity, you see nothing before you in this world but the workhouse and the grave.

But it is only right to say to you in this case, as in the previous ones, Do not anticipate troubles which after all may never come, or fancifully make a rod for your own back. Who commissioned you to prognosticate evil, when your table is spread with sufficiency, and your means are really equal to your wants? Are you called upon to provide next year's resources to-day; or is it requisite to your security and peace of mind, that you should see a sufficient income for your life locked up in your iron chest? The clock is not expected to tick twice at one vibration of the pendulum: no man, at present, looks for the sun to give the light of two days in one: and why, therefore, should you to-day exercise your mind with the carking cares of to-morrow, especially when you are forbidden so to do? You cannot add one year to your life, or one cubit to your stature; you cannot make one hair of your head white or black; and yet, you are for putting upon yourself a burden which you cannot bear, and waywardly taking it out of His blessed care who, if you be His servant, has undertaken to bear it for you! If your good name and credit are uninjured; if you are still able to pay your way as you go; if you are equal to the discharge of all the scholastic duties

you are called upon to fulfil ; if you observe no sign of discontent with you or your labours, in any of the official people who are set over you,—why will you write bitter things against yourself, instead of cheerfully and trustfully enjoying the manifold mercies Providence strews around you ?

It may be, however, that you find these forebodings an almost overwhelming burden upon your energies and your spirits, and that you cannot shake them off. If so, then take advice with any who are able to help you, and, if not too late, at once enrol yourself a member of some insurance or friendly society ; or take advantage of some of the many facilities offered by Government for securing an annuity, or a superannuation allowance, however small. Should this be impracticable, try and invest some little sum every month in the savings' bank ; look well to all the items in your expenditure, and peradventure you may find a few which, by good management and a little self-denial, may be dispensed with : probably, there are few things which will not admit of retrenchment, except your charities, wherein remember the inspired caution, " There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." If this scheme, too, prove impossible, at least avoid everything in the shape of debt ; have no old scores, like a millstone round your neck ; never anticipate your income, but see that, when it comes in, it is all clearly your own to dispose of as you will. Then try and believe that, in the upright discharge of your duty, your post will be yours as long as you need it.

Your old friends will never see you want: nor will the Government officials, if you have been a faithful servant in the good cause for a sufficient term, and if the conditions of their *pensioners* are found in you and your school. And surely, whatever they may do, He never will, who has bidden us not be anxious about such things, because the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment, yet both are His charge. Trust His merciful Providence, who feeds the fowls of the air,—not the fowls at your door, but the fowls of the air, though they have neither store-house nor barn; and who asks for your comfort, “Are ye not much better than they?” Why should He give you up? or how can He fail in His promise to His believing people, that “bread shall be given them, their waters shall be sure”? What ground have you to mistrust Him, from His past dealings; or to doubt that, if your resources ever fail, it will be then alone when you are about to need them no longer?

4. THE FUTURE OF RESPONSIBILITY.—The difficulties in the way of these temporal matters are, however, not the only ones, in regard to the future, which frequently harass the thoughtful teacher, when failing energies and increasing years remind him he is approaching “the house appointed for all living.” The time is not far off, when all will be ended in this changing scene; when his wants and fears in this world will have for ever passed away; and when he knows of a surety that, though his dust may return to the earth as it was, his

spirit shall return unto God who gave it. The season to give account for the words and deeds of the body will have fully come: the responsibility of his office must be duly met, and he will have to answer on high for his opportunities and support, his time and talents, his sincerity and truth; in short, for his stewardship in general. One after another of his friends, and of those who are engaged in the same calling with himself, have already left the busy throng: the time for his own departure draws on, and, as he realises the solemn future before him, he cannot but meet with many a trial of his faith and patience, even under the most favourable circumstances of such a responsibility; and it may be, in the case of careless or wicked men, with many a struggle for peace and safety.

In the ordinary course of life, this future of responsibility may, possibly, be now full in your view; and in anticipation of that awful account you have been forewarned you must hereafter render to the Judge of quick and dead, it may be you are anxiously endeavouring to set your house in order: upon its spiritual condition in the sight of your Maker, when He calls for you, will depend your eternal destiny, for "where the tree falls, there it shall be." However broad, or narrow, may be the line of demarcation between them, and whatever may be the wide differences in each class, there can be but two divisions of all mankind; namely, those who are prepared for such a certain and solemn event, and those who are not: so that the manner in which you

will take up this important inquiry when thrust upon you, and the comfort or discouragement you will derive under it, must mainly depend upon the condition of the house you have been building for eternity, and upon the strength of its foundation. It may be that, notwithstanding the esteem in which you have generally been held by your employers, on account of your talents, your zeal, and your natural virtues (as they are termed), you are conscious that your heart is not right in the sight of God — that you have all along been only regarding your own worldly interest and ambition, or the applause of your fellow-men — and that whatever you have been doing in the way of instilling religious knowledge, or the principles of true piety, into the minds of your scholars, has been done merely as a matter of drilling, like teaching them writing or arithmetic, without any sense of its importance, without any pleasure in such spiritual labours. Your eyes are now opened, in some measure, to the fact, that you have most woefully neglected the opportunities you have enjoyed so long and so extensively, for sowing in their young minds the good seed of the Word of God: and, perhaps, out of many hundred children who have passed through your school, you are unable to point out a single case in which your instructions have been made useful in leading that child into the paths of true godliness. Hitherto, possibly, you may have been able to satisfy yourself, that this was “the parson’s work,” and not yours; but conscience now reminds you of your own very great

responsibility in this matter, and points to the time when all the flimsy subterfuges of faithless stewards and unprofitable servants, will be stripped away. Moreover, as concerns your own personal religion, you are beginning, perhaps, to doubt whether you have hitherto had more than a mere outside profession. It is true, you are well acquainted with a large portion of the Bible, but it is only as a schoolmaster's book, and not in the light of the Word of God which is able to make wise unto salvation: and so it happens that whilst you can examine your flock, or yourself stand a close examination in its words, the blessed truths it reveals have not yet been savingly brought home to your own soul. It is true, likewise, that you have been a regular attendant at some place of worship — that on most days you have read, or repeated, in private, a certain form of prayer — that you have not fallen into gross sins, but have more or less set an example of sobriety and good conduct. Yet, all this notwithstanding, you are convinced in the secret chamber of your own bosom that you have never yet known that true repentance without which all must perish; that you have none of that saving faith without which it is impossible to please God; that you are not possessed of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Hence it is, that, in the review either of your personal or official responsibility, you cannot bear to think of the future.

Unhappily, however, one cannot stop here, in conjecturing the causes by which many a teacher in these days is compelled to regard the future of re-

sponsibility with shrinking, if not with dismay. It may be, therefore, that with all your secular knowledge, your scholastic tact, your apparently efficient powers, and your general possession of religion, you are at heart infidel in principle, and secretly a heathen in practice. You have hitherto well succeeded in deceiving your committee as to your own private notions concerning Divine Revelation, and they have not the smallest suspicion of the woful superintendence to which they have entrusted the moral and spiritual welfare of the poor children in their school: not that you have ever, probably, in any one instance, openly taught the opinions you hold, or even allowed them to be guessed at from anything you have said or done. You have, likewise, succeeded equally well in deceiving your own heart, as to the final issue of such a proceeding; but you now begin to feel that, do what you will, God will sometimes intrude upon your thoughts, that "the deceived and deceiver are his," and that you cannot brook the fearful future of responsibility before you. Every child in your school seems almost ready to rise up in judgment against your neglect and indifference, your hypocrisy and guile: and as you have been living for years without God in the world, you seem to yourself now to be without hope as regards a coming eternity.

There is yet a lower deep in this sea of storms and shipwreck; a deep into which are plunged not only many infidel in heart, who secretly deny everything, but also many of such as admit and profess

everything, yet hold the truth in unrighteousness. Where, amidst all that is fair to the outward eye and ear of the most anxious managers, the leprosy of a wicked life is secretly infecting their teacher—where, when he has performed his usual routine of duties, he gives loose to his habits of falsehood and wrong, or retires to his haunts of intemperance and lust—where, though none but the accomplices of his guilt may be well able to convict him, his own conscience upbraids him with the hypocrisy of his filthy or unjust doings,—how can he face that future of responsibility, both as concerns himself and his office, which will at times haunt him with visions of shame and ruin? No wonder he turns from the coming fearful account with horror: “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”

To suggest a healing balm for such grievous wounds as, in any one of their miseries, these things present, seems hardly to come within the province, or the purpose, of this humble volume; excepting so far as it may be gathered from the observations on personal religion in the following chapter. Yet, not to make light of those rising convictions which may be tending to bring the unhappy teacher to a right, or at least a more hopeful, mind; and in some way to hold out a light to him in his stormy sea of difficulties,—a few words of counsel may, peradventure, not be wholly unacceptable. Whatever, then, be your guilty condition, or forebodings of future ruin, never despair: there can be no room for such a feeling, as long as you are preserved from

that abyss into which hope never enters. Do not shrink from confessing your guilt to yourself, or from taking it in all its darkness to that compassionate Saviour who gave himself a ransom, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God: he casteth out none that come to him — he receiveth sinners still — and, doubtless, there is room for all who will “come unto God through him.” Make a friend of your spiritual guide, whoever he be; or if you cannot, then of some neighbouring minister, in whom you can repose confidence, and to whom you may safely look for direction; or, again, if this alternative be impossible, try and unbosom your grievous state to some truly pious neighbour or friend. Consult your Bible as the Word of God: be often and fervent in prayer: remember that time is but short, that the eternal issue is tremendous, and that, in such an hour as you think not, your soul may be summoned to give its final and awful account.

However numerous in past years may have been such distressing cases in the closing days of a teacher's life, and however numerous they may yet be found, it is cheering to know of abundant instances of an opposite character, where, after an honourable, blameless, and useful life, the pious labourer has gone in peace and joyful expectation to his blessed reward. Yet, even amongst these, all are not permitted to anticipate the end of their toil, and the account which they must give to Almighty God of themselves and their humble stewardship, with the same quiet confidence of spirit. Whilst many of their

brethren go forwards in great peace of mind to the very close of their career, and seem to anticipate the future of responsibility with meek trust and hope, these can only view it amidst many an anxious fear, and are hence frequently found to go softly all their latter days in the bitterness of their soul. None, perhaps, save some intimate friend, or one of the committee with whom he may have been more closely associated, is in the least aware of the sorrowful misgivings of such a spirit; for they seem only to add greater decision to his character, and more watchful energy to his labours: but yet they at times press him down almost to despondency, and mar some of his most hopeful prospects. It is no doubt often the case that these miserable and depressing forebodings of the future, where they are not merely constitutional, are aggravated, if not brought on, by over-fatigue, by bodily sickness, or by the infirmities of advancing age: but there is as little doubt that they are no less frequently induced by past sins being brought to busy remembrance, or by those fiery darts with which the Wicked One is, for wise purposes, permitted occasionally to harass the believing people of God. But, whatever be the cause, and however varied or painful the conflict, there is only one way in which such a wounded spirit can find rest;—yet a rest not without interruption, and not always equally enjoyed, for that probably will not be attained until the warfare is ended, and the accuser of the brethren is for ever put to silence. That way is, by looking to Him alone for righteousness

and strength, who hath borne the curse for us. Whatever may have been our goodness in the eyes of our fellow-men, whatever our zeal for God, whatever our piety, whatever the abundant evidences of our having walked with God, yet we may expect that the Great Adversary will at times be permitted, like a chained lion, to harass or vex us: we are told to expect tribulation in this world — but then the blessed truth is added, **IN ME** ye shall have peace. Here, then, let the believing teacher, however tried, rest all his anxious difficulties about the future of responsibility; and let him say with one of old, who well knew what it was to be at times in the miry clay, “Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord.”

CHAP. IX.

DIFFICULTIES AFFECTING PERSONAL RELIGION.

TRULY, it is a melancholy thought, that any persons should in these days, and in this country, be entrusted with the training and education of poor children, who do not possess any due sense of the importance of acquainting themselves with God. One would almost doubt whether living instances of such obduracy, or gross darkness, could be found: yet no one can hear, or read, the inquiries and advertisements of school-committees for pious teachers—no one can listen to the statements and experience of those who take a practical interest in visiting schools—without soon perceiving that a large part (dare it be hinted, the greater number?) of our elementary teachers are in this matter lamentably, most lamentably, defective. Allusion is not here made to that miserable set of persons—report says an increasing band—who, in all the more important truths of Revelation, are actually infidel in principle, but of that far larger class who, though they may profess to admit every Scriptural doctrine, are yet strangers in heart to the power of divine truth.

It is, probably, almost a hopeless task to expect to work any improvement in the former of these bodies of men. Baptized infidels as they are, many

of whom have had almost every advantage in training for their duties, though some are self-taught, they have added hypocrisy and falsehood to their other crimes. They could not occupy their present position, if they had not contrived to veil their real views by guile; if they had not all along deceived, or at any rate were not now deceiving, examiners and employers alike; if they did not pretend to a certain profession of Christianity, and put on the appearance of it, which possibly some experienced inspector or manager may see through, yet not sufficiently to detect their wickedness, and, by exposing their real character, to rescue the children from that aspidish poison which is under their lips. Such awfully deluded and deluding persons seem, indeed, fit to be numbered with those tares sown by the old enemy of mankind amongst the children of the kingdom. And when we hear of the vast efforts which the followers of the great apostate spirit are now making; and when we read that, in these latter days, he shall increase in power and wrath, because his time is short — one cannot but shudder even at the thought of any of his ministers being thorised teachers in our elementary schools; much more, at the eternal interests of the lambs of the fold being tampered with, neglected, and to a certain degree perilled, by such “children of the wicked one.” Whatever anxiety, then, may be felt to arrest such miserable men in their headlong career of destruction, it is feared that in most cases the endeavour will fail; not so much from the blackness of their guilt, as from the finished

hypocrisy wherewith they deceive all around them, until, self-deceived, they discover, too late! that our God is a consuming fire. But anything that could be added for their benefit, in these pages at least, would probably be only utterly disregarded with sarcastic scorn: and so, this dreadful band must here be taken leave of, with the hearty wish that their number may decrease, and that they themselves may in due season be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Meanwhile, as long as such wolves in sheep's clothing are known to infest our schools, it is clearly the bounden duty of every upright teacher, both in the sight of God and man, to do what lies in his power, and comes within his undoubted knowledge, to assist every committee, inspector, and minister in putting an effectual stop to their designs. And, surely, where proper watchfulness is exercised by all in authority, even if these wretched beings cannot be at once detected, most of their abominable leaven will be hindered from actively working; except in their constant and systematic suppression of Divine truth, on every occasion when such duplicity is practicable. Wherever, likewise, real faithfulness to the cause of God in the world is the active principle in committees, and where they are men of piety and men of prayer, one can hardly doubt but that He who knows the secrets of all hearts will frustrate the evil counsels of such wicked teachers: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath shall he restrain." Even under the most favourable

circumstances, the watchman waketh but in vain except the Lord keep the city: and why should He not watch over the plans of every good man, and every good institution, to advance His glory, notwithstanding the devices of Satan, and the guileful hypocrisies of any of his agents?

But mention has been made above, of a very different, and much larger, class of teachers; persons who, as they themselves say, and perhaps think, truly believe every doctrine contained in the Bible, and about whose general conduct and purposes such as are associated with them find little that is to blame, except in their deficiency as to real piety. They are, mostly, sincere people; both practising and enforcing (or, at any rate, professing to do so) all that they know and believe. You may, perhaps, hear them speak with indignation against everything like infidelity or scepticism; they have no taste for the shallow conceits of modern rationalists and would-be liberals; they turn away from the ribald joke and flippant sarcasm of the worldly, as they do from the filthy song of the drunkard or sensualist. Yet—alas! that it should be so with kind-hearted and moral men, with hard-working, intelligent, respectful, and amiable men, as a large portion of them notoriously are—alas! that, where so much is good, there should be so great and serious a deficiency. The one thing needful is not there. The truths of Christianity are accepted in a general way, but they are not engrafted and living principles in the heart. The children, it is allowed, are more or less well

looked after, and cared for ; but it is mind and body, mere intellect and outside conduct, or at best a cold and dull morality, that are zealously regarded. The Bible is gladly and constantly read with the little folks ; but, oh ! when one listens to the teaching and explanation, what a painful blank ! The ordinances of religion are attended with regularity, occasionally with superstitious interest and pleasure ; but there is no joy or peace in believing. The actual *realities* of the world to come are seldom, if ever, in their thoughts, as matters of delight and love ; and a living fellowship with the Chief Shepherd of souls, the taking up of His cross and following Him as His disciple, seem strangely confounded with a lifeless, barren formality. In short, however sad to say so, they “ have a name to live, but are dead.” And so, haply, they go on to the end of their days, except it should fall out (as has often been witnessed) that, at the eleventh hour, when Death has had his commission issued against them, a lingering sickness, with the careful visitation of them by judicious and pious friends, has, by God’s blessing, been the means of leading them to the saving knowledge of that truth which, for twenty or thirty years, they had not only failed to teach their flock, but had themselves disregarded. Meanwhile, what progress in the ways of true religion has been made by the thousands of poor children that have passed through their schools ? and what has become of the souls of those who, after a few years’ busy employment in a

wicked world, have been called early in life to meet their God?

But whatever may be the irreparable loss to the children, whatever the grievous disappointment to committees and every friend to the religious education of the poor, there is yet another aspect under which this matter may be viewed: it is, as respects the teachers themselves; and that, not so much in regard to the awful responsibility for their neglect and wilful ignorance, as to the grievous loss of anything like a gracious reward in the world to come. True, they have been diligent and laborious; but for what? for mere earthly, perishing things—the veriest alphabets of human learning and science—for man’s praise and man’s pay:—and, verily, they may so far have their reward. For whom have they been thus tugging and toiling in their busy calling? Has it been for *immortals*? has it been for God? has it been as servants of the adorable Redeemer? rather for self, for mere secular intellect, and as servants to managers, to inspectors, to the grovelling ambitions of this present evil world. Oh! then, how different their eternal reward, from what it might have been! Even if, at the eleventh hour, they themselves are saved, and so as by fire; yet it may be, that, in the heavenly world, there will not be even so much as one little child whom by their labours of love they had been the honoured instruments of winning to the Lord! Surely here is loss—such loss as no merely earthly honours or wealth can make up for; such eternal loss as no human tongue can tell! Oh!

the thoughtless arithmetic of those laborious, and, in a certain sense, zealous teachers, who bound all their efforts by time and sense! Go, and ask counsel from some of your brethren, who have been called to the same blessed office with yourselves, but have more wisely performed their work. Ask them how true personal religion not only supports them now under the most painful trials and conflicting duties, fightings without and fears within; but, by the example of faith and love which it exhibits, most evidently tends to win many a child to the first intelligent reception of Divine truth, if not to stamp it with a hope full of immortality! Ask them what are their anticipations of a re-union, in the world above, with some of those little ones whose last words had been spent in prayer and praise! Interrogate them upon points like these, and you will learn, more vividly than from these few sentences, what a mere intellectual drudge you have allowed worldly motives to make you. And if this be your true designation, "A mere intellectual drudge," then ask yourselves, not only why, in that future world which will soon burst upon you, you are to fare better as to entering its glories, than any other drudge — whether professional or trading, mechanic or labourer; — but what hope you have, even if you should attain to them, of a better reward than your fellows? Every hard-working, diligent, and honest man has, so far, and generally speaking, his reward in this world; but there, too, so far, they may all equally stop. Why is it to be otherwise with the

merely secular schoolmaster? why are you, who are only earthly in your motives, your means, and your end, to receive any but an earthly reward? God is no respecter of persons; neither is he mocked, though we may be deceived: for, whatsoever a man soweth, **THAT** shall he also reap. On the other hand, where true faith and the living principles of Christianity are deeply settled and grounded in the heart, and earnestly at work in the cause of God, there is not only a personal hope full of immortality, which neither opposition can quench nor sickness destroy; but likewise a meek and sustaining anticipation of *here* turning many to righteousness, and *there* shining as the stars for ever and ever. What joy is it to see such good men anxiously toiling in the white harvest-field of our schools! They may be — as often they are — obscure, unlearned, and probably in not a few things other than what their friends could wish, on many accounts: but, yet, to see men of true Christian principle earnestly toiling to raise the intellect of poor children, and to give them useful knowledge, to reform their manners, and cultivate their tastes, to form them to habits of order, comfort, duty, and labour — but, over and above all this, wise to win them to God — oh! none know the great delight of such a spectacle, except those who are permitted to see it gradually extending its blessings over a neighbourhood of irreligion and vice.

To say that the teachers in our elementary schools meet with great difficulties in the exercise and pro-

motion of personal religion, is only describing its existence and career in the case of every consistent Christian; and though it is freely granted that, in many cases, considering the wide sphere of their labour, as well as its all-important issues, it is probable the great enemy of souls will let loose against them more than his ordinary devices, yet greater is He that is with them than the foe that is against them. But the real difficulties have been already hinted above, to lie in the well-known and often lamented fact, that, however well equipped teachers of the present day may be in certain points of secular learning and moral training, the most are miserably deficient in a living piety, and in the earnest, heartfelt inculcation of true godliness. The difficulties are rather in the teacher himself than in anything externally about him. He does not value the importance and blessedness of personal religion as he should; and, therefore, it is neither seen in his own character, nor attempted to be developed in that of the children. Not that all such teachers are what is commonly termed irreligious and openly ungodly; it is deficiency of piety, a practical ignorance of Divine truth, an indifference to its growth in the young mind, that are here mainly alluded to. In such a mass of them as is to be met with on every side, there are all conceivable shades of difference: some who never knew better, and fancy they have never been in the way of improvement — some who have had, and still have, abundant advantages — some who could talk well, but whose example is ill

— some who once knew and did better, but have perversely gone back — some who have nearly made shipwreck of their faith — and some who, though truly anxious in the matter, have almost indescribable difficulties in their path. To attempt to meet all these cases, or even to suggest remedies which might be acceptable and useful to all, may, possibly, be a vain endeavour; but it is humbly hoped that the thoughts which follow may induce a few, at least, amongst our laborious and anxious masters, to walk more by faith, as concerns themselves and their charge, than as yet, possibly, they have done.

1. THE ACQUIREMENT AND PRACTICE OF PERSONAL RELIGION, is probably a matter which has often filled your mind with many a perplexing consideration, because of the difficulties which you fancy, or feel, are connected with it. Of course, no allusion is here intended to your ways and notions previous to your becoming the teacher of a school, nor even what you were when first appointed: it is what you actually now are; what, through neglect and worldliness, not to add worse causes, you have allowed yourself gradually to become, namely, destitute, it is to be feared, of everything like true personal religion. However you may disguise, or palliate, your present spiritual condition, conscience tells you that it comes within that fearful description in Holy Writ, the being “alienated from the life of God:” and hence, though in past days you have been indifferent to the doctrines and duties of practical Christianity, your eyes are now so far opened

to its necessity and consolations, as to make you desirous of being in deed and in truth, not by profession only, numbered with "the people of God." Yet you find it is no easy task to become a scholar in those things of which you have been supposed to be a teacher; if the world, or your employers, should discover your own present feelings about yourself, and the state of your heart in the sight of God, you would seem to be at once self-condemned of inefficiency and hypocrisy. Your path, therefore, is beset with many difficulties peculiar to your situation; and you would be glad, if, like Nicodemus, you could use the darkness of the night to hide your inquiries from your neighbours, and to bring you to a better knowledge of the Saviour. There are, likewise, many manifold difficulties in your way, arising from your present habits and duties, which require you to make a strong and persevering effort, if you hope to succeed in arriving at "the knowledge of the truth." Your former unconsciousness of its vital importance, as well as of its essence and character — your real and deep ignorance of the practical doctrines and spirit of the Gospel, notwithstanding all your knowledge of the mere letter, however scientific and accurate — your companionship with persons as thoughtless as yourself, with whom you have frequently indulged in criticising, if not sneering at, "the saints" — your own mistakes, misunderstandings, and fatal errors, in regard to heavenly things, as well as your evident bias on the side of the world, and your opinions about the ecclesiastical

questions of the day — your well-known dislike to certain religious books, to religious societies, and to the leading religious men — your habitual neglect of secret personal piety, coupled with an irreverent familiarity with the Bible, whose blessed pages are turned over, like Euclid's, just to keep up the knowledge you possess — and the joyless feelings in regard to eternity, which make you shrink from any close contemplation of the subject, as you would from a skeleton: — all these things, and no doubt many more like them, deeply ingrained in your habits of mind and of action, present at times discouraging hindrances to your entering upon a new and more excellent way.

Then comes a long train of difficulties, to impede your now truly walking in wisdom's ways, connected with your scholastic work itself; all of which, where they are not encountered in a spirit of watchful piety, tend to lower religious decision, and to harden the mind against evangelical practice, if not against the truth itself. The constant mixture of sacred and secular, almost in the same breath; the reading of the Bible, or of Scriptural subjects, without due thoughtfulness of the solemn matters you and the children are handling, whilst your eye seems wandering to everything and everybody in the school; the enforcing some right spelling or pronunciation in the midst of your religious instruction, or perhaps minute matters of verbal explanation, or it may be the infliction of certain corporal punishments; the constant repetition of hymns, in

as dry and unfeeling a way as if performed by a musical box; the careless and irreverent rehearsal of catechisms:—the perpetual routine of these sights and sounds before an irreligious teacher, who takes no pains to elevate his spirit to the unseen realities of another world, will, it is most likely, only deaden every sense of spiritual things in his own heart, to say nothing of its effect on the children, when under such guidance. The very sight which is constantly witnessed, of Bibles and religious books in a state of dirt and tatter—the destruction of them, which must take place—the meeting with fragments containing sacred words and holy names, scattered in every corner—a familiarity with scenes of irreverence, such as the natural corruption even of little children is, unhappily, too prone to exhibit:—these things tend to make the carnal mind more indifferent to the ways of godliness. The ever-recurring formality of daily prayers, the singing of hymns, the attending a place of worship on Sundays with the scholars, whilst the master's eyes and ears are everywhere but within his own bosom, or with God;—all lower him as a spiritual worshipper, and blunt his desire for, and enjoyment of, real fellowship with the household of faith in religious exercises. And when he has concluded his labours for the day in the school-room and with the pupil-teachers, and for a time been occupied with the secular duties devolving upon him, his weariness hurries him to his sleeping-room; where, possibly after a few mere formal words of petition, he sinks to repose, without any attempt

at examining his past career, and without any real communing with God in prayer, or by His word.

But all these *outward* temptations and difficulties in the way of an ungodly teacher coming to a knowledge of the truth, are as nothing compared with the *inward* hindrances which meet him at every turn. There lies the evil — the ever-present, deeply rooted, restless evil — in a hard, unhumbled, unrenewed, unsanctified heart: and until that becomes right in the sight of God, whatever may be its knowledge or skill, its talents or temper, and however praised or esteemed on every side, such teachers are but as whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. However it may be kept in check, the carnal mind is there; and where it is, there will be enmity against God. There may be no apparent fear of the future, and no sense of eternal danger or spiritual blindness; and that, simply, because the strong man armed keepeth his goods in peace. The ungodly teacher may perhaps rejoice in his freedom from "superstition" or "Methodism," and refuse to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely: yet, alas! "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Happy indeed are they who have resolved, however late in life, and at whatever cost, to give up the vain effort of trying to serve two masters, and at once to break through that cunning snare of delusions and devices wherein they were well nigh so

fatally entangled by the Great Fowler. Such persons, feeling that they must, like him of old, escape for their life, will not confer with flesh and blood, nor yet with the world, as to the wisdom of the new course they are taking; for these advisers are more likely to hold them back, than to help them forward, in the narrow way of eternal life. Neither will they listen to any suggestions of the Evil One as to putting off the good work to a more convenient season: they may, perhaps, never see "to-morrow," for this night their soul may be required of them; or, when to-morrow comes, they may be hardened against further convictions, like Pharaoh and Judas, Simon Magus and Demas, and so never enter into the promised rest. We are not certain of any hour but that which is passing before us: hence we are bidden to do with our might whatsoever our hand findeth to do; and the chief, if not the only, description given in the Bible of God's season of mercy is the present one—"Now"—"To-day:"—"Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Whilst, therefore, it is called to-day, they will hear his voice, lest they find, when too late, that they knew not the time of their visitation. But when shall they begin this great work of reformation, and what hope is there they shall ever succeed? These brief, but important, questions are as briefly answered by our Lord Himself; "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God:" so that, when the will of God is adopted as our law, when we are labouring to learn and to do it, then such

spiritual wisdom and strength shall be given, as will eventually witness within ourselves that we have passed from death unto life.

It is evident, then, that as the Holy Scriptures alone contain the record of God's revealed will to man, it is to them you must ever have recourse for all authoritative declarations concerning it. However wise and good any other writings may be, they are but the words of fallible men; they are not "the law and the testimony," either as to authority or power; and it is only so far as they speak according to the written word of God, that there is any light in them. It is only by the hearing or reading of this blessed volume, that, in His ordinary dealings, God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, is pleased to shine into any benighted heart. Hence we are told, to "search the Scriptures;" that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" that "the Holy Scriptures are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus:" and so, the enlivening hope all should indulge who study its glorious pages, ought to accord with the gracious promise in regard to them, "My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." But perhaps you will plead that you have been for years a reader of the Bible, and yet now find yourself without this heavenly wisdom: your heart, you fear, is still unrenewed by Divine grace; and you have no good hope touching the world to come. Well,

granted that you have thus read, or even, if you please, learned the whole volume by heart; what has been your manner of life in the mean while, and what have you been looking to discover from the inspired record of God's will? If you have been living in wilful sin, and not conforming your life to the Divine precepts, is it likely you could in that way please God, or be comforted by His grace, when you have been habitually receiving that grace in vain? Or, again, if you have been turning over the pages of His blessed word, merely or chiefly, from worldly and ambitious motives, instead of to secure the salvation of your soul, why, most likely, you have there found all you ever sought for. The fault, therefore, is not in the instrument, but in yourself, and in the spirit wherewith you use it.

If you would prosper, then, in your endeavours to become truly religious, and to feel the principles of the Divine life working within you, such an erroneous system as this must be utterly abandoned; and you must come, as a little child, to be taught of God, in that only way whereby He has promised to instruct us in the things which belong to our peace. There has, probably, been hitherto a most grievous, if not fatal, mistake in your views of the person, work, and offices of the adorable Redeemer; and, therefore, it would be well, in the first place, to look to the manner in which you are making Him the only foundation of all your hopes, lest the spiritual house you are building for eternity perish by-and-by in the coming storm. God and man in one ever-blessed and mys-

terious person, Jesus Christ, is the only revealed medium of communication between God and fallen man: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." He alone has made the only atonement which has been made — and ever can be made — as satisfaction for our sins, and hence He alone is called "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He alone can present us without spot, and faultless, before the throne of God, and hence He alone is designated "the Lord our Righteousness." And, by way of connecting both these blessed offices of the Saviour with the Eternal Father's free and boundless love towards mankind, we read that "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid; and if you have disregarded it, no wonder that your Christianity is merely in word,— a barren, joyless profession, destitute of power. In no other way can you meet your Creator as a just God and yet as your Saviour; in no other way will you obtain that free gift which came upon all men unto justification of life. For, whoever may deny it, or explain it away, "*this is the record*, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

In like manner, also, it is most probable, you have all along had most erroneous and mischievous views of the office and work of the Holy Spirit.

You may, indeed, have acknowledged Him to be God, and, in a general way, have admitted the necessity of His assistance in the great work of salvation; but you have neither sought after, nor experienced, that Divine agency upon the heart whereby "the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Perhaps you have been looking to receive from the hand of man that which none but God can bestow; vainly imagining that man alone could work in you and for you, by the necessary operation of sacraments and certain other means of grace, that mighty transformation of the soul into the image of God which, in Scriptural language, is termed a new creation — being born again — putting on the new man — being quickened with Christ — newness of life: all which designations, and many more like them, clearly point out God as alone its author, and prove how utterly repugnant it is to that pretended *opus operatum* which, though many Protestants repudiate in words, they admit, and cling to, in deed. There is such corruption, pride, and hardness in man that, until he is mastered by Almighty power, the heart is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The natural man, under whatever circumstances of rank and wealth, learning and authority — or, on the other hand, of meanness and poverty, barbarism and ignorance — "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." If, therefore, your efforts to walk with God in the ways of true religion, are to be

crowned with success, you must not only have Scriptural views of the work of the Holy Spirit, but an experimental knowledge of His power over your own naturally evil heart: and it may be, it is owing to your serious errors in regard to such matters, that, though ever learning, you have hitherto not been able to come to the knowledge of the truth; and that all your vows and good resolutions, your promises and purposes, as well as the afflictions and successes you have met with, have failed to lead you into a more excellent way. Whereas, on the contrary, "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit;"—"where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;" and there, likewise, "the fruit of the Spirit" will be seen to His glory.

There have been, no doubt, many other hindrances to your walking in the paths of true godliness, which it does not seem needful or expedient to mention here; though, until they are removed, they must still constitute difficulties in the way of your attaining to anything like decision in personal religion: such, for instance, as false and defective views of the corruption of your own nature; and a wordly estimate of sin, with its usual consequent, sinful practice. With regard to the former of these, the language of Holy Writ is so plain, so repeated, and so forcible, that it would be wonderful how it could be explained away or disregarded, if one were not prepared to find this additional proof of the humiliating doctrine, in such wilful blindness, pride, and obduracy. From the cradle to the grave, the nature of

fallen man is declared in itself to be vile : " Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me " — " the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked : who can know it ? " — " I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing " — " if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us " — " all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Where this important doctrine is not received, or is not realised, is it at all likely that any will truly feel their need of a Saviour, or will earnestly seek the help of the Holy Spirit ? Will not all such be numbered with those of whom it is written, " They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick ? " — And then, concerning any sinful habits in which you willingly allow yourself, though such inconsistency may be encouraged by the world, because, notwithstanding all your profession and good talk, it keeps you on their side, you must be well convinced that there can be no agreement between sin and righteousness, no communion between light and darkness, no real peace or reconciliation between you and God : " Can two walk together, except they be agreed ? " Surely not ; and therefore as long as you continue living in wilful sin, instead of walking with God, like Enoch of old, you can be only walking with those who are designated " the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose glory is in their shame, and who mind earthly things."

It appears almost unnecessary to add much upon your perseveringly and devoutly using all the means

of grace, if you seek to acquire, or to practise, true personal religion; or even to mention more than one of them by name. They have, no doubt, all of them been long well known to you, nominally, as such; though you may have, perhaps, made light of them, or used them in a merely formal and lifeless manner: and, moreover, they have been already sufficiently noticed for the present purpose, in a previous chapter. Yet it may be advisable for you to get some assistance, in the way of direction, or sympathy, if you would employ them in a spirit more becoming your necessities and your wishes. If, therefore, you can bring your mind to it, apply to some really Christian friend, or, if you think he can and will help you, to your own minister; if neither of these alternatives seems to be advisable under your present circumstances, then read with prayerful attention some of those books which, happily for you, abound on these important matters, such as Wilberforce's *Practical Christianity*, Serle's *Christian Remembrancer*, Venn's *Complete Duty of Man*, Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, &c. &c. These will all, in their way and measure, give you, if you use them aright, much of that practical assistance in the knowledge of true piety, after which you may be now earnestly longing. But, if you would attain to a full measure of the Divine blessing, and would partake of the Divine assistance in a manner which can never fail, then see that you are often and fervently engaged in secret prayer; not what you, probably, in past days, have termed

prayer, namely cold and formal visits to the throne of grace in the morning and at night, or during some season of affliction, — but a real lifting up of your heart to God, a pouring out your wants and sinfulness, your confessions and desires, your pleading and waiting, into His merciful and ever-listening ear. Whoever you are and whatever you have been, if you lack wisdom and will ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, it shall be given you. Whatever may be the extent of your wants or the depth of your guilt, however you may seem to be lost in ignorance, solitude, and helplessness, yet God waiteth to be gracious, though no man care for your soul. You are plainly bidden by the Redeemer Himself to ask, to seek, to knock at the door of mercy; and you are promised that, so doing, you shall receive of Him all that is needful, you shall find more than tongue can tell, and that door of His love and power shall be opened which neither man nor devil can shut against you. The parable of the unjust judge, the case of him who borrowed loaves from his friend, the story of the Syro-Phœnician, all point out the importance of earnest constancy in prayer; and declare, moreover, the blessed truth that, though He may appear to linger in answering their requests, yet He never fails to hear His own elect when they cry unto Him. He has reminded the praying soul that, if an earthly father can give good gifts to his children, how much more will their Heavenly Father do so, especially in regard to that all-important one, the gift of His Holy Spirit. It may be, that, to

humble and to prove you, He will not soon or largely manifest Himself to you, as He usually does to His waiting people; you may find clouds and darkness to be round His throne, and the burden of guilt and sorrow to be still pressing heavy on your conscience. Yet, cast not away your confidence which hath great recompence of reward: you have deeply deserved the frownings of His wrath, and may therefore patiently wait for the smiles of His mercy: bear the indignation of the Lord, knowing how you have sinned against Him. Yet, withal, continue knocking, and the door will be opened: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;" for He never yet "said unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain." Ask, therefore, that you may receive, and that your joy may be full. He whom you serve, has promised largely when He said, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it:" yet whatever be your difficulties and necessities, never for one moment doubt but He will make good His word in due season. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant."

2. THE INCREASE AND ENJOYMENT OF PERSONAL RELIGION.—The hindrances and difficulties already spoken of as operating extensively to the non-acquirement, or depression, of personal piety, will on the main be found opposing its development and consolations. But, in addition to these, fresh ones will spring up, as the true Christian advances in his career of decision and holiness; and there will seldom come a time in his history, when he will not

have to encounter new temptations from within or without, and new devices of the Great Adversary, all fitted in their kind and degree to weaken, to retard, to deaden his profession. Where the old snares are not sufficient, others will be brought into play: the great object his spiritual enemies have in view is his eternal ruin, though they are often indifferent how this is ultimately accomplished; and, even if they cannot succeed in their chief end, yet, if they can disgrace or nullify his profession, if they can succeed in putting him *hors de combat*—getting rid of him as a true soldier of Christ on the great battle-field of the world,—they will use every weapon, and rejoice in so much success. Hence it is sometimes through allurements, sometimes by fear, that the assault is carried on; at others, it is a fiery zeal and overweening confidence, or else a frigid superstition and unwatchful formality, that are employed to sap the foundation, or at any rate to destroy the entire usefulness, of the spiritual house which has been built upon it. And, though all the attacks of such foes are in vain, and ever must be, as long as in well-doing you commit the keeping of your soul to a faithful Creator; yet, unhappily, such devices and temptations succeed too well for a time, if not altogether, with many who had begun to run well. Hence, on one side, when such trials of their faith and patience beset their path, many are offended at the cross; they cannot take it up and follow Him whom so lately they thought they loved; they go back, and walk no more with Him: on another

side, there are the most startling inconsistencies, religious indecision, worldly conformity, doubtful liberties, low morality, and indulgence of the flesh in some one particular or other: and again, in another quarter, we meet with certain who would be deeply insulted if their Christianity should be doubted, but who laugh at consistent holiness of life, at works of pious charity, at heavenly meditation and close communion with God; and are wont to describe all who practise such ways as foolish and Methodistical, as saints and fanatics. How far more mischief, and much deeper too, do such persons inflict upon the young mind, and upon the cause of God, than the openly wicked! and how much more must they have to answer for, if so they die, than if they had never known the truth! To be reviled by His declared enemies was something for the Blessed Redeemer to endure, but to be wounded in the house of His friends was surely worse: well then, might He say to some of these latter, "The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you," as He forewarned others who had witnessed His mighty works, "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you."

Possibly, some teacher whose eyes may now be wandering over these pages, knows in a measure what such things mean. The beginning of your religious career, whether earlier or later in life, had its difficulties and its joys; but after having attained to a certain point, you never went further: you have been rather going back, under the pressure of new

temptations; and as to your religious joy, that has long since gone, for it seemed to vanish with the feeling of spiritual life. Your official duties are performed about as usual, and seem to give the ordinary satisfaction to your employers; though you yourself are conscious that they have lost their value for eternity, and all about you, who have eyes to see such things, deeply regret your ways. Perhaps it may be this very want of true piety, now become more evident,—this increased deficiency in everything like a holy life,—that has brought upon you many a petty trial: you have noticed a want of confidence in your religious profession, you have seen the downcast eye, or the averted head, as if hinting dislike of your religious talk, and you have felt that one after another of your patrons and friends has ceased to converse with you upon religious matters. Yet you well know you have merited more than this; and, secretly in your heart, you cannot but justify their conduct towards you. There is about all of us a certain something which the religious mind will discover, if “the truth” be in us: though our views of doctrine and discipline may be very different, and even unpalatable the one to the other, yet thus far we shall feel at unity among ourselves, that the one thing needful is being pursued by all; the root of the matter is, however enveloped in rubbish, found in all. So that, however much, in these days of widespread profession, it may be counterfeited in any way; though the sham and pretence may be successful, for a season, in passing current with all true

Christians; yet the reality will at length come to light, and they will almost instinctively turn away both from the words and the fellowship of hypocritical, or, to use a softer term, affected, piety. "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid:" "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh:" and, therefore, by the living example of what they see and hear, the true Christian, and the world likewise, will each come to their respective, but opposite, conclusions.

Surely it is high time for you, now, to awake out of sleep, to make your calling and election sure, and not to have your friends express merely a charitable hope about your dying hour. If you have been hitherto satisfied with Balaam's religion,—a wish to die the death of the righteous, but without any earnest endeavours to live the life of the righteous,—beware lest you perish through choosing your own delusions. The very fact that you have not increased in piety, and that you know little or nothing about its joys, is a strong evidence of your dangerous declension from your former convictions, whatever they were. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day;" but if your path, instead of this, has been almost the reverse, where can it end but in the thick gloom of hopeless night? What ray of real peace and joy is it likely to convey to any of your young charge? You would do well, then, to pluck your foot out of every snare in which you see you have been entangled; to retrace every backward step, until in some measure

you again realised your first love; and to return to all your former habits of devotion, your former religious friendships, and your former yearning attendance on the means of grace, which you have gradually exchanged for your present ways. It would be almost impossible to analyse the manifold difficulties in the way of your growing in grace, though they are only those which are incidental to every one who would follow on to know the Lord: yet they all, probably, are connected with that deficiency in spirituality of mind, and in the experimental knowledge of God, which constitutes the common, but wide, distinction between the real and the merely professing disciples of the cross.

If a few of these difficulties are here named, it is not because they are the chief, or the most dangerous, ones; but rather as specimens of the whole train, and as provocatives to induce you to get rid of their bondage. A *spiritual ignorance* of the purposes and the power of Divine truth, has so long been fostered by you, that you have almost brought your mind to believe every one to be an enthusiast, if not a deceiver, who lives in the practice and enjoyment of those principles the words of which you yourself profess to believe. Though, like Nicodemus, you say that these truths come from God, and like him you may ask, How can these things be? yet there you stop: you will not apply, as he did, for the answer; and so, though you may be able to speak with the tongues of men and angels, though you may understand all mysteries and all knowledge, it

evidently profits you nothing, because the love of God is not shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost. Until, therefore, this practical ignorance is removed, until you are wholly transformed by the renewing of your mind, and experimentally know the grace of God in truth, you can never be one of those who truly say, and truly feel, "to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." — *Spiritual sloth* is another besetting difficulty, a foe that has slain its tens of thousands. It is astonishing what forms men will go through, what penances, and labours, and buffetings, what shame and sufferings, they will endure, what convictions they will stifle, what eternal perils they will run—if they may be left to exercise only the externals of religion, and be excused from looking inward, from examining the inner man, and from bringing themselves to work out their salvation according to the Divine record. Peradventure this spiritual sloth, this spiritual weariness in well-doing, this dislike to examining the spiritual witness within yourself, has almost hardened you to a hatred of evangelical truth and its disciples; but yet your own conscience will occasionally tell you that, if a man work not while it is called to-day, the night cometh when no man can work: the unprofitable servant will then be detected and cast out—the master will have risen up, and the door will be shut. — *Spiritual double-mindedness* has made many unstable in all their ways. They would gladly hold with both parties, with God and the world, with holiness and sin, with a life of pleasure and a profession of Christ. They

endeavour to bring the two into something like agreement, by smoothing down the rough edges, and extreme opinions, and offensive views on each side; they are found occasionally in both parties, have friends in both, and try to reconcile both to a more moderate standard, such as they would persuade themselves they have found. But, alas! all this time, they have been going back more and more into the broad way; and though, perhaps, they may have persuaded many a double-minded professor to accompany them thither, yet they have never brought one out of it into the narrow way, and never could by any such a course. Meanwhile, what says the Bible upon this point? "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad;" "The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." — *Spiritual fear*, perhaps, has been another sore difficulty in your way: call it *spiritual shame*, if you prefer the smoother appellation; but anyhow, it is that "fear of man" concerning which we are so plainly told it "bringeth a snare." You fancy, or you have reason to know, that some of those who are over you in authority—or some to whose opinions you judge yourself bound to defer—or some to whom you are indebted for past benefits, and to whom you are looking for future advantages — would be offended if they discovered your bias in the ways of true godliness, and found that you were "one of the saints." And so, afraid lest your piety should be thought singular,

lest you should be called puritanical, or charged with wishing to seem better than your neighbours, you have by degrees given way to that miserable want of courage which shrinks from the obloquy of man, whilst it braves eternal wrath; you have been tempted to join the ranks of those who were afraid to confess Christ lest they should be put out of the synagogue, and who "loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Yet that very singularity of piety which you dread, would show you to be rather a companion of the few in the narrow way of life, than of the many on the broad way to destruction; and you well know the certain peril attached to being ashamed of Christ, or being afraid to confess Him: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed;" "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Supposing, therefore, that all your worldly plans succeed, and that you avoid all this charge of singularity, what good will it do you hereafter, that you have been afraid of the censure of ungodly men, however great or talented or powerful they may be? And what shall it profit you, if you gain the whole world, and lose your own soul?

But, however many and great may be the difficulties in the way of your growing in grace, there are none of them which are invincible; all will give way to an earnest and prayerful determination to walk in the commandments of God, and to delight yourself in His ways. The good opinion of the

world may, perhaps, seem to you now of some consequence, but by-and-by it will little matter whether it praised or hated you : and, hence, you had better at once cast aside its accommodating expedients and its flattering schemes, whenever they come into anything like opposition to the plain tenor of the word of God. When you have satisfied your own mind what is the revealed will of God on any matter which perplexes or tempts you, let nothing move you from His counsel ; but rather, say with one of old, " I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right." An honest, regular, and habitual course of obedience to His commands, cannot fail of bringing down a blessing : " Them that honour me, I will honour ; " and in proportion as you make persevering exertions to practise what you know, you will also make progress in personal piety : " For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance." See, then, that your religion be a living and practical REALITY. Never be ashamed to be numbered with the excellent of the earth, in every opportunity to get good, and in every work of mercy, whoever may frown. Aim to copy Him who hath not only suffered for us, but left us an example that we should follow His steps ; and so doing, He will manifest his presence within you : " If a man love me, he will keep my words ; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

It is in such a frame of mind that you will enter more than you have yet done into the true and

consoling enjoyments of personal religion ; and it will, probably, for ever cease being that dull, lifeless, and joyless thing you may have hitherto found it. Who that has not experienced in his own case the loving-kindness of the Lord, can at all know what it is, or tell it out to others ? “ If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious,” you will enjoy that sweet fellowship with Him which is the privilege of His people alone, and which, though you have often read and spoken of it, you have, probably, never truly realised. You will enjoy the contemplation of that mercy which forgiveth all your iniquities, and healeth all your diseases. The peace of conscience, and the holy joy, you will feel on every recollection of the forgiveness of your sins, and of your escape from the meshes of the world and of Satan, will lead on to greater holiness of life : “ She loved much ” — why ? — “ Her sins, which are many, are forgiven.” You will enjoy a holy peacefulness of mind amidst all the troubles and afflictions through which you may be called to pass : whatever storm may beat upon you, He will be recognised by you, as directing its measure and its course ; and you will be free from unnecessary alarms, because, like the sleeping ship-boy, you know that your Father is at the helm. Whatever correction He puts upon you, however grievous or long its endurance, still you will feel all is in love ; you will rise above second causes, above all notions of its being in vindictive wrath, and will be confident that the rod is in the hand of Him who chasteneth, yea, “ scourgeth, every son whom

He receiveth." You will confidently wait the issue of every trial, as sent on some errand of mercy to your soul; and whilst you rejoice to know that His hand will eventually far more than heal the wound He inflicts, you will also rejoice in the assurance that He thus afflicts you in order to "make you partaker of His holiness." Whatever, therefore, may be your condition in life, whatever your lot, whatever your friends and possessions, your disappointments or successes, you will now more than ever feel a confident pleasure in His righteous will concerning you, as making all things work together for your good. Instead of fretting under burdens, or yielding to slavish fears, you will indulge the lively hope that He is ever watching over you, and making your way acceptable to Himself: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delighteth in his way."

3. THE HOPES OF PERSONAL RELIGION.—What a wonderful power has hope! whom can it not sustain? How many are made sick, even by its being deferred! how many are engulfed in the depths of distress through its want, or by its loss! It is one of those three blessed graces which still abide with man; and, through his changing pilgrimage, it is to be linked on with faith and charity, until the consummation of all things. We are even said, in Holy Scripture, to be "saved by hope." What then does it witness to you, touching the realities of time and eternity? When you come to try your own personal religion,* to examine yourself closely and honestly, how fares it with this anchor of the soul? Does it

console, cheer, sustain, invigorate, and uphold you? or, contrariwise, when you have pulled away the props of the world, cast off every disguise, and are alone with your own conscience, is hope then merely a name, an unreality, an utter blank? All this must depend upon whether your heart is right in the sight of God, and whether your hope "enters into that within the veil:" then it will be sure and steadfast, the result of experience, a hope that maketh not ashamed, a lively hope, a blessed hope, "the gladness of the righteous." Such a hope will not only extend its joyous consolations over the changing scenes of this world; but all the glorious promises concerning the never-ending future will, through it, be made sure to the true believer. "Godliness has promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come:" and touching both, it may prayerfully, as confidently, say, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."

In *temporal matters*, it may be, all will not fall out as you had expected, and earnestly desired. You may not, possibly, have that ease and luxury, that health and wealth, that fame and worldly success, which distinguish some of your neighbours: but these mercies, if unsanctified and misused to mere selfish ends, as too often they are, bring with them a curse instead of a blessing. What would it profit you to be clothed in purple and fine linen, and to fare sumptuously every day, if the end of those things should be death? Surely it is far better to receive just your daily bread from Him who not only

knows your necessities, but also what prosperity you can bear; to have that food which is convenient for you, those domestic comforts, those friendships, that worldly honour and wealth, which He sees to be good: for "better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith." If you have been seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things shall be added to you, in that measure, and way, and season, which His unerring wisdom appoints. He will bless you in your possessions, however mean they be in the eye of the world; and He can make you to be stronger, and healthier, and happier, even with pulse and water, than others who feed upon their dainty meats, so that, as you feel no want, you need fear none: "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." The envious and the malicious, the wrongful and the proud, open foes and mistaken friends, may, peradventure, put many a difficulty in your way, and for a time darken your prospects, or injure your good name; but He whose servant you are, will enable you to silence the worst opponents, and will bring good to you out of the apparent evil: for when a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. Moreover, if He incline your heart to walk in His ways, He will also lead you to choose your friends from amongst His; and thus, by their counsel and fellowship, you will be kept from many a temptation to join in the follies of the world, or in the pleasures of wicked men; and will

be numbered with such as are employed in every good word and work. Whilst others, who do not set God before them, are plunging into temptation, and adding iniquity to iniquity, — you will find the practice of true piety such a check upon your inward corruptions, and upon the ensnaring temptations from without, that, through God's watchful mercy, and through the might of His spirit, you will be kept far off from evil. So that, however much you may at times be led to grieve over the prosperity of the wicked, yet, if you compare their lot with your own in its real enjoyments, in its peace and satisfaction, in its pleasures and duration, you will find that the hopes which the religious man connects even with temporal things, far outweigh the boasted, but dangerous and destructive, rejoicings of the ungodly : "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but he blesseth the habitation of the just."

But in *spiritual and heavenly matters*, the hopes of true personal religion will shine out still more brightly, like a morning without clouds. If you are indeed walking with God, however short you may come of that standard you aim at, you will still feel that you are reconciled to Him, and that He will never leave you or forsake you. Though constrained to admit with one of old, that your "house is not so with God" as it ought to have been, and as you had hoped, — doubtless, you will be able with him also to add, "Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure ; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it

not to grow." As you strive to ascend the hill of Zion, and there meet with new joys, new prospects, new companions, on many a side, to encourage and gladden you,—you will more than ever delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. As the fruit of the Spirit, of which you have long had the earnest, abounds in you more largely, you will increase more and more in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after the image of Him that created you. Neither years nor troubles have it in their power to destroy this heavenly likeness, for it is the birthright of the whole spiritual family, and is, moreover, the especial work of God Himself: it may be, here and there, more or less visible; but the world will see, albeit unwillingly, the Divine nature reflected in every true believer, faintly it may be, but still reflected in some poor resemblance to His compassionate goodness and mercy, His truth and justice, His holiness and love: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Not that there will be room for boasting herein; rather they must take shame to themselves for their being so dull of hearing, and so slow of heart: nevertheless, they will still long and labour after conformity to Him: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

Where personal religion thus reigns within you as a dominant principle, how it alters all your *labours*,

both in their character and in their result! Not only is a new tone given to them, a new method adopted, a new end aimed at; but new and heavenly prospects arise. You now realise your position better, as a servant of God, as a soldier of the cross, as the teacher and leader of a band of immortal spirits, for whom Christ died: and when you call to mind how each of those little ones must hereafter dwell for ever in heaven or hell, and that, possibly, according as you direct them,—how should it kindle your zeal and emulation to fight manfully in the good fight, that by all means you may be honoured of God to save some of them! Many a time, in your meditative moods, have you regarded the struggle going on in your schoolroom, between evil principles and evil powers on one side, and the good on the other; a tiny battle-field truly, but one whereon there was as surely a deadly conflict being waged, as was seen at Waterloo: and how earnestly do you long, at such times, so to train and discipline your little band, that at length they may be more than conquerors through Him that hath loved them. And it is just the remembrance of what God has so mercifully, and so freely, done for your own soul that will provoke you to this labour of love, with greater devotedness as your personal religion increases in strength and hope. When you see intellect being developed, but not grace; when you observe the murky dawning of the coming evil days; when you have had many a warning to guard your school (unhappily, one of the enemy's choicest marks), and your own plans, from

crooked, yet plausible devices; when mischief is evidently ripening in the young mind, caught up from the pestilential infections on every side; when many fall off altogether from education, or use it only as a tool to work out the hurly-burly of confusion and scramble which they promise themselves; when, though the world may deride the foreboding, good men's hearts are failing them for fear, as they see the strife thicken, and the evils that are coming upon the earth. At such trying seasons to your patience and responsibility, what will sustain you but the assured hope that you have long since taken God as your portion, that He is on your side, and will cover not only your head in every day of battle, but all those whom you earnestly train for Him, and commit to His keeping? Oh! who can tell the blessing which truly pious and praying teachers bring upon their country and its rising population, in these last days? May the good Lord add to their number a hundred fold! Such an assured hope will nerve your efforts, and give wings to your courage, as day after day, concluding your anxious toil, you feel that you have indeed been trying to labour for the great Captain of our salvation, and know in your own conscience that your record is on high. Hope will then hold up those hands which otherwise might often hang down: you will count nothing impossible with God—no difficulty past a remedy—no one incurable, or hopeless; but instant in season, and out of season, through good report and through evil report, you will exercise your vocation in the spirit of a mission-

ary (though not entrenching on the office of a minister) amongst your children and their friends. Thus doing, however much opposed or reviled, you cannot fail to win the esteem of every good man who knows you; and, what is infinitely more important, the blessing of Almighty God, our ever-gracious Redeemer, who was once a little child for our sake, will descend upon you and your charge, like the dew upon Hermon. The hope will often sustain you, that He who holds the hearts of all in His power, will give you many of those immortal souls whom now you are instructing in the ways of His loving-kindness and truth; and that hereafter, when He has accomplished the number of His elect, they may be forever enrolled amongst the ransomed of the Lord, and be glittering gems in that "crown of righteousness" which He will give you in the great day of His appearing.

But the hopes connected with personal religion will not be confined to the final success of your labours as a teacher of others, as seen in the heavenly world; they will reach to yourself, to your own individual salvation, and to your own entrance into the promised rest at last: and they must do so, if you are to experience anything like that joy and peace in believing which the Holy Scriptures so frequently describe. However great may be your decision on the side of godliness, the promise it has, "of the life which is to come," will be fully needed to sustain you in the pilgrimage and warfare of the true Christian. The vexatious

cares of life, the imperfections of your services, the unworthiness of your love, the ceaseless and malicious wiles of your spiritual enemies, and, above all, the inbred foe within your own bosom, — besetting sin — will all conspire against your eternal interests ; they, and confederate evils like them, will bring many a cloud over the horizon of your tranquillity and peace ; they will mar many a joy and steep it in bitter tears ; they will frustrate many a plan, interrupt many a duty, and nip many a bud of fruitfulness ; and well will it be, if they do not, at some time or other, so gain the mastery over your spirit, as to draw down upon you the frowns of your heavenly Father. Such seasons of trial as these will not only abundantly prove the excellency of that personal religion you have all along been cultivating, but they will likewise demonstrate the worth of true Christian hope ; for flying to it as an anchor of the soul, though you may not cease to be buffeted by the storm, yet in Him who can hush it at His will — in Him to whom alone you know you have committed the keeping of all that you have, and are — in Him, you shall always have peace. And when that advanced period of your days has come, wherein you realise the havoc time has made alike upon body and mind ; when the friends you once knew have passed to their long home ; when new ones are cold-hearted, and disregard your infirmities ; when many a rising storm seems to threaten the loosing of that silver cord which unites you to life ; when the rebuke of man, and the fiery

darts of the wicked, assail you in some trying way,—oh! the blessed comfort of that “hope which maketh not ashamed.” But, in that season of trial beyond this, the last one you may ever know, the very vestibule of an opening eternity, when you feel and are plainly told that all that is earthly is passing away,—how will your spirit more than ever strive to “hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end!” When, in anticipation of soon standing at His bar, from whom no secrets are hid, you look back to past neglects and omissions, mistakes and pretences, self-will and sins of almost every dye—when in a few weeks at most, possibly in a few hours, you will have to give account of the deeds done in the body—when, stripped of every disguise, of your little brief authority, of the excusing support of patrons, you have to answer for the use of every talent committed to your charge for your own good and the good of others,—when, with such awful realities in view, you can calmly and hopefully look upwards to that friend who sticketh closer than a brother, and appeal to Him, “Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee:” then you will pre-eminently experience the value of personal religion, the worth of an assured hope of salvation, through the great Mediator of the New Covenant. You will have the testimony of your conscience, that, in Christian simplicity and in godly sincerity, you have aimed to have your conversation in the world; that amidst weakness and ignorance, poverty and temptations, you have tried to live as in

His sight, and to labour for that bread which can never perish : and you will, through grace, at length for ever close your eyes to fear and suffering, looking for His mercy, who alone can wash us from our countless sins in His own blood, and make us “ kings and priests unto God and his Father.” “ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me ; and I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”

CONCLUSION.

AND now, gentle reader, having ended this survey of some few of your difficulties, it only remains to say, "Farewell." Amidst so much that is grave, and so much that is gay, it can hardly be expected your displeasure has not been occasionally provoked at the plain things which have been said, and the plain admonitions which have been hazarded. Yet, be not angry with any one who seeks to do you a good office: count no man your enemy because he tells you the truth. It is very far from pleasant to have the secret and mischievous wound laid open, even by the keenest edge and the most skilful hand; how much less, when by ruder means and a rougher process? It is far from easy to suggest any remedy for the cares and sorrows which we see are harassing our closest and best-known friend: then, how much harder is it to mitigate them in the same way, where we and the sufferer are individually unknown the one to the other? Yet what lurking evils are there now at work in the land, hindering and marring the work of teachers in our elementary schools, both for time and eternity; in some cases well known, in others barely evident, in others altogether hidden from every eye but his who commits them, and His who in every place beholdeth the evil and the good!

And what perplexing cares, vexations, and sorrows are on every side, weighing down the energies and happiness of many a patient and anxious labourer in the field of education; sometimes with but little sympathy and less assistance, at others where they are concealed from, or at least unnoticed by, all with whom he has to do in this world! Say, who can look upon such things without regret? who can hear of their mischief and misery, their poignancy and end, without a wish to do good to so large and meritorious a band of persons, though in some things they be miserably mistaken? Take then, gentle reader, the will for the deed, though no good service has been rendered. Let not plainness of speech poison the motive which employed it; and do not attribute to it any reckless indifference to your views and feelings, whether right or wrong, or any attempt to add one straw to your burdens, or the wilful suggestion of impossible alternatives. Rather, give full scope to that charity which thinketh no evil, but believeth all things and hopeth all things. Then, possibly, as the bee gathers honey from many a source that man despises, you may be led to see some things otherwise than now you do; to rouse your dormant energies; to determine on a higher standard; and to hope for such results to your labours as shall not only prove a blessing to your country, but shall continue to flourish when the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

The *sceptical*, the liberal, and the open infidel, into whose hands these pages may fall, will no

doubt for the most part be much offended with the religious observations, and the Scriptural words, which are purposely scattered over them; and be half-disposed to cast the book aside as a tissue of superstitious and impracticable absurdities, or an attempt to prop up a sinking enthusiasm, which the wisdom of the present age has detected to be worn-out and useless. Not that they will be all equally disgusted at the interweaving of Divine truth with their scholastic duties; or will all equally give way to that sneering spirit which so painfully marks the shallow and inflated learning of many in these latter days. Some amongst them, haply, may feel inclined once more to test the validity of their conclusions upon the most important of all subjects, by the only rule, and in the only way, whereby they can unfailingly arrive at the truth; and whereby, also, they may be convinced of the desperate peril they run, by staking their own eternal interests, as well as those of others, upon a cast of the hazardous dice of man's wit and man's corruption. Thus may they be led to inquire what they have gained, and what they have done, by an endeavour to live without God in the world: until, at length, believing the inspired declaration, that "the world by wisdom knew not God," they may seek it, for themselves and for their children, where it is offered "without money and without price." As to the more careless and obdurate in that unhappy party, whose increasing number we are prepared by the language of

Prophecy to look for, they may, it is feared, continue their contempt and their scorning, until calamity overtakes them, or they are suddenly cut off, and that without remedy. But, however sure they may feel that ground to be, upon which they are walking towards an unseen world, and would teach others to walk likewise, and however gaily they may sneer at the practice and inculcation of piety, let the scoffers answer this question — “If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”

The *secular* teacher who, catching the spirit of the age, has brought himself to believe that religion, and what is commonly termed education, are such separate matters that they ought to be divorced; that the one only encumbers the other, and should not be introduced into elementary schools for the poor, — will hardly fail to object deeply both to the opinions and the counsels he may here meet with: and this not so much as to the details, in themselves considered, as to the principle and issue of the whole question. He may, however, it is hoped, be induced to re-consider the purpose he has in view, that is, if he be truly a sincere and earnest man; and how far the system he advocates, and is pursuing, has hitherto answered its professed end, or is capable of doing so. He may, perhaps, be brought conscientiously to weigh his dogma, that the schoolmaster is not concerned in the teaching of such truths, however important they may be; and likewise to examine practically, what present happiness and satis-

faction, to say nothing of consoling anticipations touching the Future, have attended the narrow bounds within which he has hitherto confined his labours and expectations. Then, it may be, he will see how utterly hopeless is every scheme of reformation when disconnected from the true knowledge of God, as revealed in His word; how human learning may be elevated, and purified, and hallowed by Divine; and what infinitely higher hopes, and more blessed rewards, are attached to the successful teaching of Heavenly wisdom. So doing, he may be brought to adopt a more Scriptural method in the education of his little flock; and may look for brighter success and fuller satisfaction to that blessed God of whom it is written, "Unto man, he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding."

The *religious* and energetic teacher will not, it is expected, find every observation and opinion in accordance either with his own views and experience of men and things, or with his expectations as to the way in which errors may be amended, and those many difficulties encountered which beset the school-master's path, if a pious, zealous, and consistent person. But the differences will be of that kind, and extent, which most likely will remedy one another, the more they are considered, and the more they are compared with the contradictory conclusions to which his fellow-labourers of all sorts have come. From the drift of the main arguments he

will seldom wander far in practice, and in the results he aims to accomplish; and if they assist him to rouse and fortify and expand his own energies, not a little will still be gained. Notwithstanding his exceptions to some things, it is likely that even from these more good may accrue both to him and to the lambs of the fold entrusted to his care, than at first he might be disposed to allow could be the case: that he will more than ever seek to train them as good citizens, not only for this world, but for that which is to come; and that he himself will be increasingly watchful to have his last works more than the first.

Meanwhile the days are but few, and they evil, wherein it will be given to any to labour in this good cause. The time is short, under every view of it, for none knows what shall be on the morrow; but as the world grows older in iniquity, the time becomes still shorter for good men to labour in behalf of their day and generation. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. The din of strife is increasing on every side; men of all grades, and of every sort, are beginning to join the ranks of their party, and to take up their ground. Predicted events are hurrying on to their end, and those which yet remain to be accomplished may possibly run together very fast. The enemy must come in like a flood, by-and-by; and, according to the warnings of Holy Writ, the days of conflict and suffering will be sharp, though short. Happy, then, will those servants of their Lord be, who, when He comes to restore all

things, shall be found watching! "If he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants: verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

THE END.

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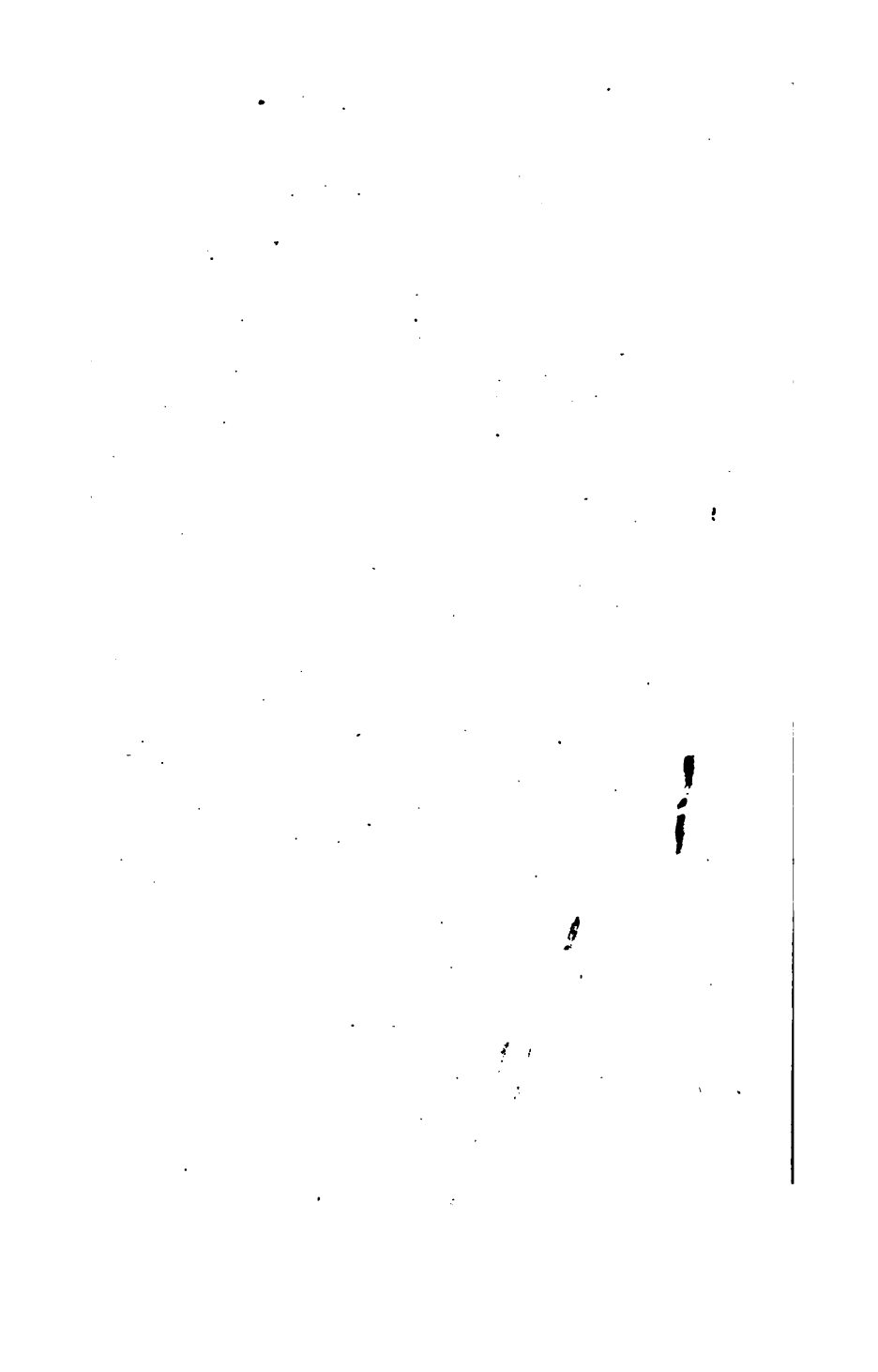
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